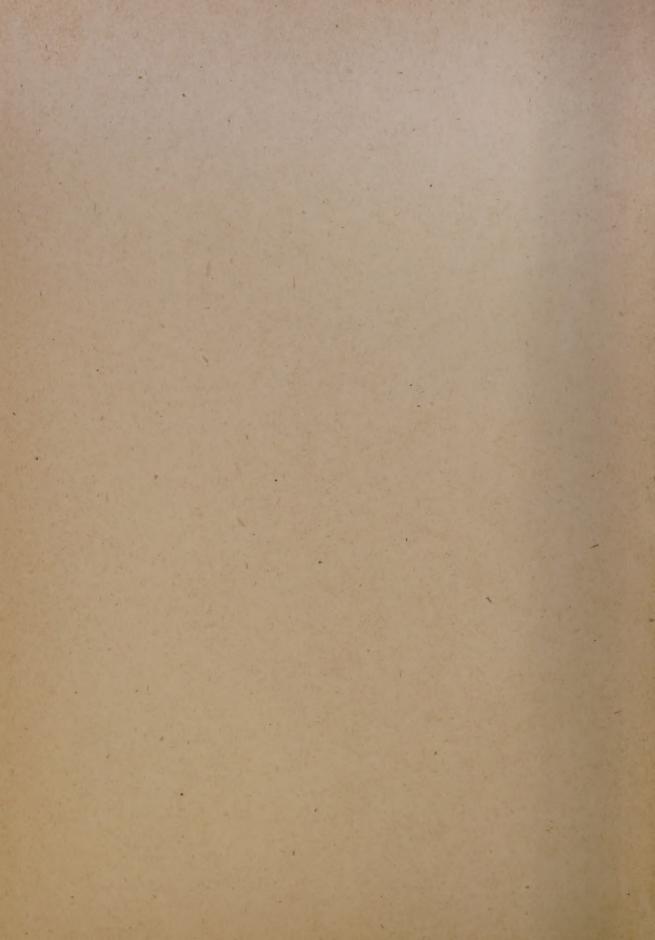
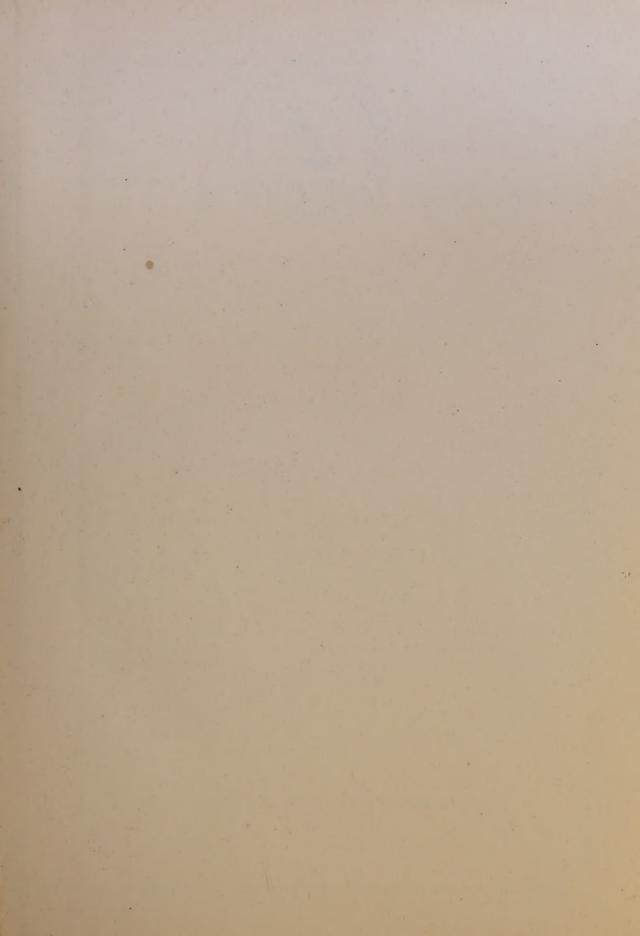
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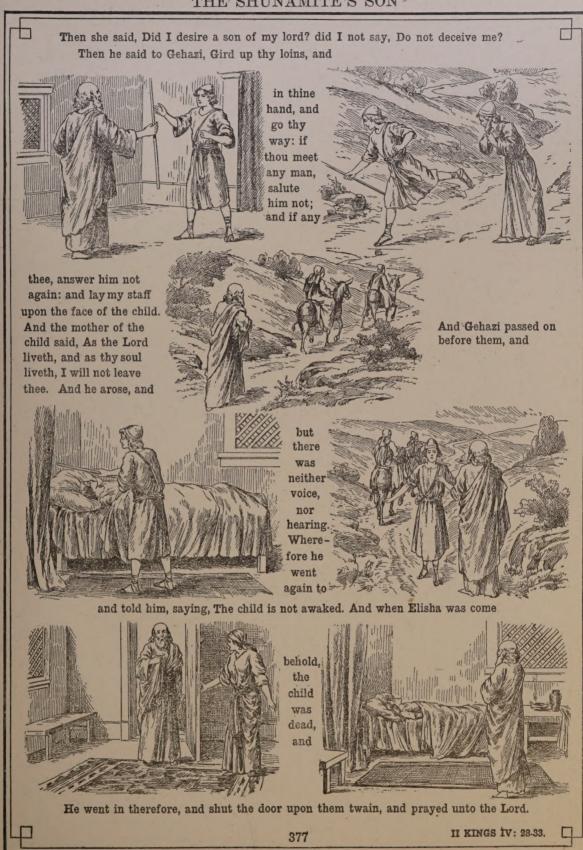
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THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS II KINGS 4:8-37—READ ALSO II KINGS 8:1-6.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Grant us such faith in Thee that we may recognize in all Thy dealings with us the hand of a loving Father. Even in sorest affliction may we have the assurance that all is well.

Open the eyes of all bereaved ones to the knowledge that through faith in Jesus their departed shall live again and be restored to them. Amen.

What cheering words are these; Their sweetness who can tell? In time, and to eternal days, '''Tis with the righteous well!'''' 'Tis well when joys arise, 'Tis well when sorrows flow, 'Tis well when darkness veils the skies, Because He loves me so.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 895. Place, Shunem. Persons, Elisha, Gehazi, his servant; a Shunamite woman, her husband and child.

Scripture Setting: The Power of God over Life and Death. God's presence in death, Psa. 23:4. Our Guide in death, Psa. 48:14. Looses those appointed to death, Psa. 102:20. Ransoms from the power of the grave, Hos. 13:14. Holds the issues of death, Psa. 68:20. Holds the keys of death, Rev. 1:18. Delivers from fear of death, Heb. 2:14-15. Victorious over death, Isa. 25:8. Death abolished by

Christ, 2 Tim. 1:10.

Life and Conduct Setting: This lesson teaches us that, 1. Elisha is known as a man of God through his daily walk and converse. 2. Kindness to one of God's servants is rewarded. 3. Gcd claims what He has given. 4. The mother seeks God in her bereavement and her faith triumphs over her sense of loss. 5. The unconverted Gehazi finds no power in Elisha's staff. 6. Only through prayer and repeated personal endeavor is Elisha able to restore the child to life. 7. The mother receives again the child whom God had given and taken away.

THE TRIUMPH OF A MOTHER'S FAITH.

A Great Lady. The little town of Shunem was only a few days' journey from Jerusalem, situated in the midst of evergreen olive groves, waving cornfields and purple vineyards. All its homes were prosperous. The mistress of the finest house in the village, who was a great lady not only because of her possessions, but great in character and faith was so eager to minister to God's servant, that she would actually watch for Elisha's coming, and upon his appearance hasten to greet him and constrain him to enter her home and eat. Her hospitality was so genuine that "As oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat."

Elisha lived his religion in the home. His gentleness, kindness, and habit of prayer caused his hostess to tell her husband that she was convinced that Elisha was not only in name, but in reality a "holy man of God," and she proposed that they build a sleeping chamber for his especial use. Accordingly an "aliyah" or chamber was built, resting partly on the wall of the house and projecting beyond it like a balcony, with a latticed window opening to the street. It was furnished with a bed, a seat, a table, and candlestick, that the prophet might write; and the little room devoted to God's prophet became to the hostess, God's sanctuary.

Hospitality Rewarded. One morning after a night's rest and repose in the prophet's chamber, Elisha sent Gehazi, the young student who served as his attendant, to his hostess to find what he might do in return for her hospitality, even offering to use his great power with the king in her behalf. But the

woman was too great to desire the petty benefits of court and she replied to Elisha's offer with quiet dignity, "I dwell among mine own people." Gehazi carried back her answer, and Elisha conferred with his young attendant, who suggested that the home was childless. Their hostess might disdain the king's favor, but deep down in her heart was the longing of every true woman for a child of her own. "Call her," said Elisha. The woman came in answer to his summons. stopping reverently at the threshold. Gehazi had guessed aright. When told that in time a child would be born into the home, her joy was so great she could hardly believe the prophet's assertion. Yet scarcely a year elapsed before she was a happy mother.

An Unexpected Blow. Several years passed: the child God had given them grew from infancy to boyhood. He was the joy and delight of the home, growing daily and hourly dearer to his parents. It was hard to tell which welcomed his sunny presence most, the mother in the home or the father in the field. No morning could have been brighter and fairer than that summer morn when the mother watched her boy run eagerly to the harvest field where the father was at work, that he might watch the men reap the grain and bind it into sheaves. After playing awhile in the harvest field the little fellow turned a white face to the father. and exclaimed, "My head! my head!" To the busy father it seemed only a passing illness and he ordered one of the young men to carry the child home to his mother. All the healing arts of that ancient time proved

unavailing, and we have a pathetic picture of the mother, powerless to stay the death angel's destroying touch, as her boy breathes his last upon her knees.

It Is Well. Quietly, and as if her darling were asleep, she carried the still form up to the prophet's chamber and laid her precious burden "On the bed of the man of God and shut the door upon him and went out," thus committing her child to God who had given and who would restore. So great was her faith, that she evaded her husband's questioning and even withheld the knowledge of the boy's death from him. Why incur useless sorrow when eventually, "It shall be well?"

Her one desire was to run to the man of God. She could not wait for the servant, but with trembling, eager fingers saddled the ass herself, and urged the servant whose duty is to run behind and goad the animal forward, "Drive and go forward." He is not to consider her comfort, but whip the animal into utmost speed, for moments seem hours to the bereaved mother. The man of God saw her afar off and sent his servant to meet her. To Gehazi's query, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" she answered, "It is well." Marvelous faith of the woman, triumphant over the greatest loss and utmost bereavement that may pierce a woman's heart!

A Mother's Anguish. Her soul had risen to mountain heights of faith, but the mother's heart would overflow. Hastily dismounting, she threw herself down before the prophet and caught his feet. The attendant would have thrust her aside, but Elisha's tender heart was touched by the anguished woman's appeal. "Did I desire a son of my lord?" It is the question asked by bereft mothers ever since. Why had God given her this treasure, and then snatched His gift from her? It were better the home had remained forever childless.

Man's Failure and God's Power. Elisha commissioned Gehazi to take his staff, gird his loins, and without stopping to exchange salutations with anyone lay Elisha's staff upon the child. But alas, there was no virtue in the prophet's staff except as God endowed it with power. Gehazi journeyed to Shunem and laid the prophet's staff upon the face of the child, but he did not awaken. The task needed the prophet's deep consecration and dependence on God as well as his staff. Elisha entered the wall chamber and, shutting out the mother and Gehazi, he prayed unto the Lord, and then he went and lay upon the child, mouth upon mouth, hands upon hands, his eyes upon the closed eyes of the dead until the dead and the living were one. He felt the child's flesh. It was warm! But Elisha was only a man and his faith so small that the task demanded another effort. Pacing the floor, walking from one room to another and communing with God, he finally returned to the chamber of death, and when he stretched himself upon the child, the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. The mother's faith had

triumphed. All was well!

The Mother Receives Her Child Again. Opening the chamber door, the prophet called Gehazi and sent him for the mother. Never did the mother forget that moment. In the bliss of that reunion she realized that it was the hand of love which for a short time had withdrawn her child from her. No moment of her life, not even when the baby head first nestled against her breast. was ever so filled with bliss as this. Dearer and closer than ever before was the tie between mother and child, for had she not known both loss and restoration! And her child was a thousand times more precious because of that cruel time of separation. In an excess of joy she fell at Elisha's feet and bowed herself to the ground in adoration of the goodness of God, then she took up the son who had been restored to her from death itself and went out.

Was she not a type of the great company of mothers who gather at the throne of God, and fall at His feet to receive from the One who was victorious over death, the dear children who are restored to them, not for a season as was the Shunamites' son, but forever.

Quiz. 1. What miracle of Elisha was similar to this? 2. Name three characteristics of the Shunamite woman which made her great. 3. her hospitality manifest? 4. How did How was How did she show herself superior to social ambition? she exhibit a firm trust in God? 6. What comfort does this story bring to bereaved mothers?

Seed Thoughts. 1. One's life is the best proof of Christian calling. 2. He is truly great who is content. 3. Good men carry a blessing everywhere. 4. One loses nothing but gains much through hospitality. 5. A mother's faith in God often saves her boy from worse evils than death. 6. Prayer was more powerful than Elisha's staff. 7. Great trials should be patiently endured. 8. Our trials have often a blessed end. 9. Gehazi entered the chamber of death alone and was powerless to help. 10. Elisha carried the Creator of life with him and conquered death. 12. All mothers may trust God to restore their child to them.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

NAAMAN THE LEPER



Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and. honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a



And the
Syrians had
gone out by
companies, and
had brought
away captive
out of the land
of Israel a
little maid;
and she

Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of

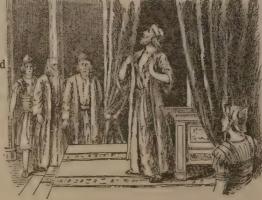
the land of Israel. And the king of

Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter



of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee,

that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he



and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

NAAMAN THE LEPER.

And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had



that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a



in Israel. So Naaman came with his



and



of the house of Elisha. And Elisha



unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. Then went he down, and



seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS 5:1-19.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank Thee that the least of Thy servants may proclaim Thy power, and that Thou dost not work through kings and princes, but that Thou are ever easy of access to all who humbly come to Thee for cleansing. We rejoice in the cleansing power of the blood of Thy dear Son and render grateful thanks for His cleansing. Amen.

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plung'd beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply, Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die.

THE, SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 894. Places, Damascus, Jericho and the river Jordan. Persons, A little slave girl; Naaman, a captain of the Syrian army; Elisha, the prophet; Gehazi, his servant.

Scripture Setting: The Cleansing Power of Christ. The blood of Christ cleanses from sin, 1 John 1:7-9. Its power, Isa. 1:16-18. Cleanses from sin, Psa. 51:2. A thorough cleansing, Ezek. 36: 25-27. Christ's willingness to cleanse, Mark 1:40-41. A condition of discipleship, John 13:8. Cleanses the church, Eph. 5:26. He washes away our sins, Rev. 1:5. His cleansing is efficacious, Psa. 51:7. Sanctifies, 1 Cor. 6:11. Saves, Titus 3:5.

Life and Conduct Setting: 1. With all the world can give Naaman is not secure from the greatest misfortune. 2. Through her testimony and faith in God, a little slave girl points the way to Naaman's cure and salvation. 3. Naaman learns that God's favor is not through kingly influence. 4. Elisha, the man of God, is impervious to the ostentation and show of a worldling. 5. Simple as is the mode prescribed for Naaman cleansing, he finds no other way save obedience to the Divine command. 6. Once cleansed and restored Naaman becomes a humble, grateful and generous follower of the one true God.

A LITTLE MAID AND A GREAT SOLDIER.

A Great Soldier. The scene opens in the ancient heathen metropolis of Damascus; Benhadad, the insolent and powerful foe of Israel, is on the throne. His favorite general is commander-in-chief of all the royal forces, though Naaman owes his high position to his own deeds of valor as well as to kingly favor. His fine face and soldierly bearing are worthy of the name of Naaman. which means beautiful; high rank, unlimited authority, and immense wealth render his position enviable. But worldly honor is never without alloy: Naaman is a leper, and leprosy is so loathsome and hideous a disease that nothing save sin is so blighting and fatal.

A Captive Slave Girl. In one of the many sorties of the Syrians into Israelitish territory, a division of the Syrian army had borne down upon a village, plundering it and carrying its inhabitants into slavery. A little girl was torn from her parents and dragged across the border onto Syrian soil, where, desiring to ingratiate themselves into the favor of their commander-in-chief, her captors presented her to Naaman. He gave her to his wife, never dreaming of the great blessing the insignificant little slave girl was to bring to him.

Despite misfortune, the child retained her trust in God, accepted His strange providence and faithfully served her mistress, even sharing her sorrow over her husband's unfortunate malady. One day when the mistress was unusually downcast, the little maid

exclaimed, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy." It required all the child's courage to speak to the great lady, but the little slave girl could not lose this opportunity to testify to the power of God.

A Royal Message. Her mistress thought the girl's word too foolish to tell her husband, but one of the upper servants repeated the little slave's word to the great Naaman, and he made them known to the great king of Syria, who urged his favorite to "Go to. and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel." The great man's cure was to be obtained through royal authority and the power of money. Accordingly Naaman set forth on his journey with a retinue of attendants, the king's letter and ten splendid robes and silver and gold to the value of more than fifty thousand dollars of our money, to bestow upon the fortunate one who should effect his cure.

Benhadad's letter made no mention of the true God or Elisha his prophet. He took it for granted that just as he had magi who were at his beek and call, so Jehoram was the fortunate possessor of a high priest of magic who could cure leprosy at his royal master's command, and with his old-time insolence of power, Benhadad demanded Naaman's cure of the king of Israel. When Jehoram read Benhadad's impossible demand he thought the wily Benhadad was only seeking a quarrel with him that he might declare war against Israel, and he rent his royal mantle in token of his distress and cried, "Am I God to kill and to make alive?" For so hopeless was the dread disease that the Hebrews regarded a leper as one dead.

Help Appears. In the midst of the panic a messenger appeared from Elisha. His first question was a rebuke from the prophet to the king: "Why hast thou rent thy clothes?" Though Benhadad's demand exceeded the royal authority, it was not beyond the power of Israel's God, who can kill and make alive. "Let him come to me." was Elisha's command. The king gladly dispatched his unwelcome and embarrassing guest to the prophet, and Naaman and his gorgeous retinue appeared before Elisha's humble abode. The Syrian commander had a high sense of his own importance, and he confidently expected the prophet to come out of his house and greet him with humble obedience, but Elisha knew that Naaman would have to lose all his pride before God could help him: so though the most accessible of men, he only sent a messenger to tell the haughty Syrian captain to, Go wash in the Jordan (which was twenty miles away), not once, but seven times, if he would be cleansed from his leprosy. Surely, the prophet did not know what a great man was at his door!

Pride Is Humbled. Naaman expected that an obsequious prophet would bow low before him, calling on his God and magically working the great man's cure, which obligation Naaman would discharge by so loading the magic worker with gold, silver and costly apparel that not God, but the great Syrian commander, would be the benefactor. Instead, to be treated as though he were a common suppliant—a beggar—Naaman was very angry. Were there not rivers in Damascus, whose crystal waters, flowing down from the mountains, were cool and ideal for bathing?

The haughty soldier turned away in a rage, vowing that if wash he must, he would at least wash in one of the rivers of his own land instead of the muddy, sluggish Jordan. He ordered his charioteers to drive away, and the cavalcade moved forward, when one of his attendants approached him, addressing Naaman with Oriental deference as "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" Anger always dethrones judgment and the camel driver's timed remonstrance restored Naaman's reason. If he went away in a dudgeon there remained nothing for him but final death from a most loathsome disease, while if he obeyed the prophet's command there was a possibility of cure. For the first time there came to the mighty Syrian a realizing knowledge of his condition. What availed power and rank, wealth and pomp of station if he was a leper?

The Cleansing Stream. His decision is

made, and he orders the cavalcade to the Jordan. It is a drive of twenty miles or more, but since he has yielded his pride there is a simple dependence on the prophet's words, quite foreign to the hitherto imperious commander. He urges his attendants on with eager haste, for all his hopes are now fixed upon the once despised Jordan. The cavalcade reaches the river, whose clayey banks have so discolored the stream that it reminds one of blood.

An awed silence falls upon the company as Naaman stands by the 'river's brink. Expectation is on the faces of some, while others try hard to hide the sneer at their captain's folly. He plunges into the water and rises to the surface. The mighty Syrian has participated in many battles and great councils, but this is the most important moment of his life. There is no change in the leper's appearance; a second and third time he enters the water, but the same signs of leprosy cling to him. Now he goes under for the sixth time. Surely if there is any efficacy in the waters of the Jordan some signs of cure will be apparent. But no, the man is as leprous as when the command was issued. Naaman's heart is heavy. As never before he feels the burden of his leprosy.

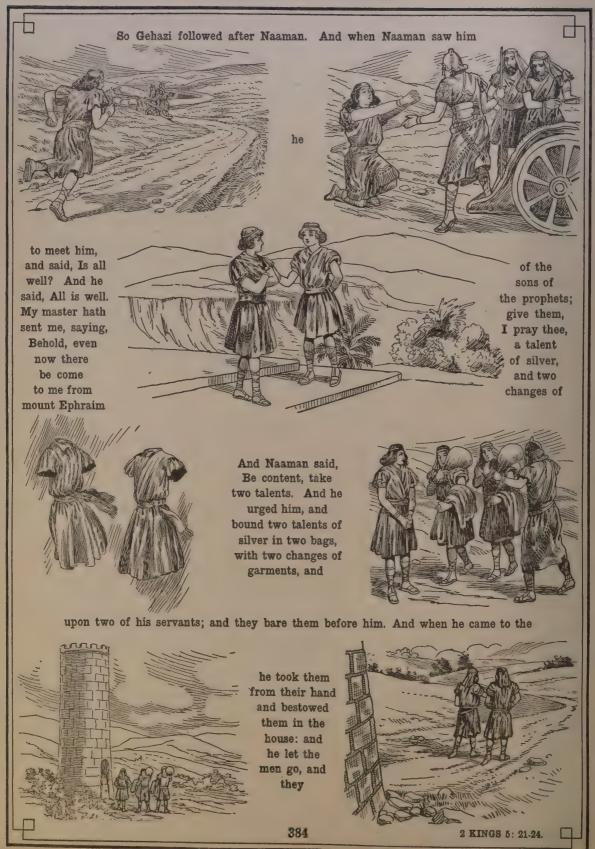
But stay,—the command was seven times and God exacts implicit obedience from those who would receive His benefits. The heathen soldier prays to the one true God; the seventh time he plunges under the wave. His prayer is answered; the health-giving hand of God has touched his leprous body and he is clean. The light of God's countenance has dispelled the darkness of heathenism. Not since he was a child have arm and thigh shown such firmness and glowing health. A soul has been born under the Jordan, and instead of the leprous creature who sought healing in its waters a new creature stands upon its strand, praising God for his restoration and cleansing. As he reappears among them, there is a shout of joy from those who line the river bank. Naaman is no longer a leper.

Quiz: 1. To what former king of Israel did Benhadad send an insolent message? 2. What great virtue was manifested by the little slave girl? 3. Did Naaman's gold prove efficacious? 4. What does the psalmist say concerning the help of princes? 5. Do you think there was any healing power in Jordan's waters? 6. What might this story typify?

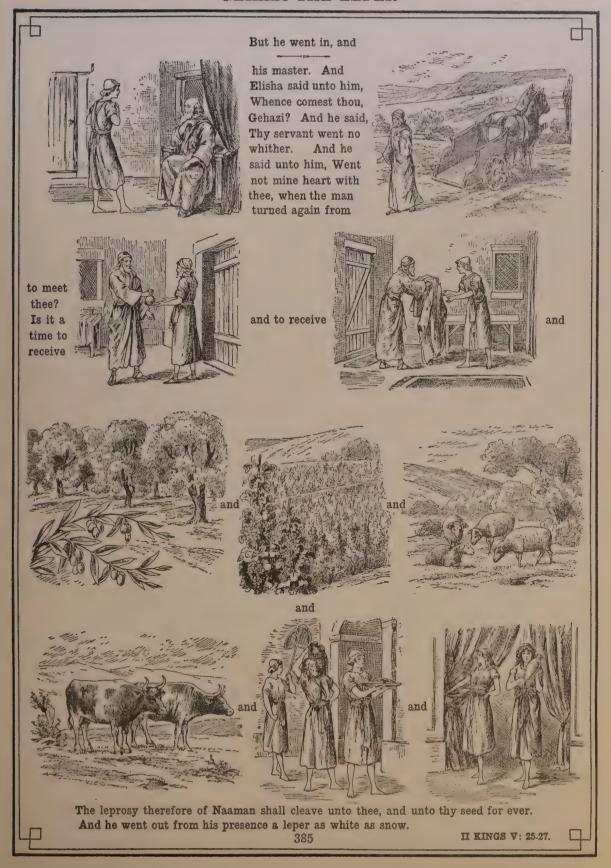
Seed Thoughts. 1. Earthly happiness is always incomplete. 2. The little maid carried her religion with her. 3. Testimony for God is never lost. 4. The words of a slave may outweigh the letter of a king. 5. He who prescribes the form of blessing he shall receive from God, is often disappointed. 6. God does not ask great things of us, but he demands that we do whatsoever He asks. 7. Many men think they can buy God's help with gifts and money. 8. God cannot help those who refuse to obey Him. 9. The worldly wise reject God's plans because they are simple. 10. The blood of Christ is a cleaning fountain.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

GEHAZI THE LEPER.



GEHAZI THE LEPER



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS 5:20-27.

Prayer: Lord deliver us from the sin of covetousness and falsehood. Let not the leprous blight of these sins fall upon us, but may we ever loyal, disinterested servants of Thine, seeking first always the advancement of Thy Kingdom. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

"How sad our state by nature is! Our sin-how deep it stains! And Satan holds our captive minds Fast in his slavish chains."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting. .Time, B. C. 894. Place, Jericho. Persons, Elisha, Naaman and Gehazi.

Scripture Setting: The Sin of Covetousness. Eve's sin, Gen. 3:6. Covetousness forbidden, Ex. 20:17. Abhorrent to God, Psa. 10:3. Evil consequences, Prov. 15:27. Covetousness and righteousness contrasted, Prov. 21:26. Causes disobedience, Ezek. 33:31. Woe to the covetous, Hab. 2:9. Its kindred vices, Mark 7:22. Christ's warning against covetousness, Luke 12:15. covetousness, Luke 12:15.
Life and Conduct Setting: In this lesson: 1.

We observe the contrast between a liberal, righteous soul and one covetous and wicked. 2. With true grandeur and loyalty Elisha refuses to be recompensed for a cure wrought by God. 3. Gehazi covets the gold and costly apparel his master has refused. 4. This covetousness makes him a liar and libeller of Elisha. 5. He seeks to hide his dishonesty from the man of God and fails. 6. The prophet declares Naaman's cure and conversion too sacred an occasion for material recompense. Naaman's leprosy falls upon Gehazi.

A COVETOUS MAN'S FOLLY.

The New Convert. Even though it entailed a detour of fifty miles to return to Jericho, Naaman was too great a soul to go back to Damascus without manifesting his gratitude to Elisha, so we find the gorgeous cavalcade returning to Jericho. It was a triumphal procession; proclaiming Naaman's recovery to the throng that lined the streets. It was a spectacular public demonstration that Israel's God and His prophet were greater than Israel's panic-stricken king.

The great procession, which has almost kingly pomp, does not stop at the palace. Naaman has done with royalty. His allegiance has been transferred to One greater than any earthly king, for the miracle has been inward as well as outward. The physical change is less striking than the change in the real Naaman. Pride is gone, all sense of caste has disappeared; instead of waiting outside for the prophet of God to come out and render obeisance to him, Naaman dismounts from his chariot, knocks humbly at Elisha's door and stands before him with bowed head while he imparts a wonderful piece of information. "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." The Syrian has traveled a greater distance than from Damascus to Samaria, farther than from Jericho to Jordan. He has come from darkness to light, from heathenism to God, from spiritual death to spiritual life.

True Greatness. He calls to his attendants to bring the gifts of money and apparel that had seemed so great when he started on his quest for health, but which now seem small in comparison with the benefit he has received, and humbly begs the man of God to accept them. The kindly face of the l

prophet glowed with simple joy at Naaman's declaration of faith in the true God, but Elijah's rugged grandeur was never more impressive than the air of quiet majesty with which Elisha disposed of the Syrian commander's gifts. Perhaps it required as great heriosm to refuse glory and honor and reward for himself as it did to defv a king or confront the prophets of Baal. Gehazi, the prophet's attendant, looked longingly at the richly woven robes and the treasure of silver and gold, but Elisha would rather exalt God than to enrich himself. He wanted Naaman to know that his cure was of God and not of man. Elisha was jealous also for the honor of his profession. Naaman had come expecting to find a common magic worker; he must learn that a true prophet of God served for a higher reward than money. Moreover, Elisha was too great a patriot to accept emoluments from his country's foe. Perhaps he wanted Naaman to learn the worthlessness of aught he had, in comparison with what God could give, so Elisha waved aside the silver and gold and costly raiment with the declaration, "As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, I will receive none."

The Great Man Departs. The Irish peasant carries a bit of native soil with him across the ocean and plants the bit of turf under his door-step that he may feel at home in a strange land. So the ancient Jews transferred earth from Jerusalem to Babylon to build a temple on it, that it might seem as though they were worshipping on their own sacred land. Naaman felt that he was in the land of the true God, and that the very soil was holy, and he begged for a few loads of earth to carry back to Damascus, on which to build an altar to the true God, whom he

will serve save when compelled to accompany king Benhadad to a house of idol worship, when etiquette and custom demand that he shall bow before the idols; for strong and fine as is Naaman's character, he has not courage to go contrary to common custom, even though his conscience tells him it is a sin. Elisha sent the new convert away with the fatherly benediction, "Go in peace," and Naaman departed.

Evil Thoughts. Gehazi watched the splendid cavalcade, noted the rich camel trappings, magnificent chariots and richly appareled retinue of attendants, and contrasted this display of wealth with the austere life of his master and himself. It was a mistake on Elisha's part to have refused the Syrian's gifts; Gehazi even convinced himself that it was his duty to look after his master's interest. Of course he would not accept all the great man had offered his master, but a little to lighten their necessities. Having convinced himself of the legitimacy of such an act, we find the youth employing the name of God and in such haste to put his plan into execution that he ran after Naaman.

As the converted Syrian hurried from his chariot and apprenhensively asked, "Is all well?" Gehazi framed a lie, saying, "My master hath sent me," and in Elisha's name he proffered a request for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for two imaginary young men, whom he piously averred were sons of the prophets. It was a modest request, but it maligned his master, since it raised a doubt as to the sincerity of the prophet's former refusal of the gifts. But Gehazi covets the splendid robes which he saw spread before his master, and he cares nothing for the impression as to Elisha's honesty which he may leave with the Syrian.

Deeper in Sin. The grateful Naaman, rejoicing in the opportunity to serve his benefactor, insisted and even forced two talents of silver and two changes of garments upon Elisha's attendant, sending two of his own servants with Gehazi to carry the treasure to the house. Fearing to let his master see him with the gifts, Gehazi dismissed the two men at the gateway, and stealthily hid the garments and bags in the house.

What a contrast to his master was the covetous Gehazi, with a lie on his lips, disloyalty in his heart and disposing of his booty like a thief? It

was a difference of heart; the heart of one was fixed on God until Elisha's life was as beneficent as a palm tree in the desert which affords drink, food and shade, to all who seek its shelter. heart of the other was fixed on worldly things until it became as deadly to himself and others as the noxious vine that poisons all who come in contact with it.

Having hidden his treasure, Gehazi "went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" The sin of covetousness prompted the lie to Naaman: the fear of discovery leads to the second lie, when the culprit declares to his master, "Thy servant went no whither."

The Wages of Sin. Gehazi hopes to deceive Elisha, but the prophet's vision had reached out to the meeting of Naaman and the receipts of his gifts-gifts which might have been acceptable at another time and under other circumstances. This was not a time "to receive money and to receive garments, and olive vards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men servants and maid servants." graft which Gehazi had received and of which he hoped to keep his master in ignorance.

We have evidence that the warm-hearted Elisha loved his young attendant and sadly and slowly he pronounced the culprit's sentence, "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and to thy seed forever." The youth stood with downcast eyes and as his glance fell upon his hands for the first time, he realized the hideousness of sin; already the flush of health had gone, the skin was dry and hands and arms bore the awful deadly whiteness of leprosy and as his sin had grown from a covetous thought to lying dishonesty, so now the leprosy was spreading over his entire body. Never again would he feel the rich, warm pulsing of healthy blood through his body, and saddest of all, the curse of his sin would be transmitted to his children's children and their children's children for-ever, so unending are the consequences of sin, and so terrible its punishment.

Quiz: 1. Name three other examples of covetousness given in the Bible. 2. Why did it require heroism to refuse Naaman's gifts? 3. Where did Gehazi's sin begin? 4. Is it possible to commit a single sin or does one sin beget another? 5. Name some of the sins that result from covetousness.

Seed Thoughts. 1. Gratitude is the sign of a great soul. 2. The soul that has met God is always humbled. 3. It is easier to overcome an enemy than to overcome temptation. 4. Many people run into sin. 5. Satan is a master of evil invention. 6. Illgotten wealth always proves a curse. 7. There is always a day of judgment. 8. As one vibration of light travels millions of miles, so one sin may cover centuries. 9. We live not only for ourselves, but centuries. 9. We have after.
for those who come after.
MARGARET WINTEINGER.

ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS

And the



of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself, there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the



of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his



and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the



that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy



And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither



and a great



and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS

And when the



behold, an host compassed the city both with

of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth.



And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha



and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of



round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord. and said, Smite this people,

I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with



according to the word of Elisha.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS 6:8-18.

Prayer: Dear Lord, We thank Thee for Thy presence and guardianship; for the angel of the Lord that encampeth round about them that fear Thee. May we ever trust Thee in the hour of danger. Open our eyes to the spiritual world about us, that we may realize Thy presence with us, and Thy watchful care over us. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

Onward, Christian, though the region Where thou art be drear and lone: God has sent a guardian legion Very near thee, press thou on.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 890. Place, Dothan. Persons, Elisha, his servants, and the

Syrian host.

Scripture Setting: The Invisible Host. An innumerable army, Job 25:3. Commanded by God, Psa. 68:17. A Heavenly host, 1 Kings 22:19. Greater than the enemy, 2 Chron. 32:7, 8. They visit the earth, Gen. 28:12, 32:2. Their mission, Psa. 34:7. Empowered by God, Psa. 91:11-12. Angels watch us, Heb. 12:1. Control the elements, Rev. 7:1-3. Around the throne of God, Rev. 22:3-4.

Life and Conduct Setting: This is one of the

most beautiful and comforting stories of the Bible.

1. Though the king and his court disregard him. Elisha seeks their safety by sending warning to the ungodly king of Israel. 2. By such warning he endangers his own safety and the king of Syria endangers his own sarety and the king of Syria-seeks to take him captive. 3. A great army is sent out against one man. 4. Elisha's servant is affrighted by the enemy's forces. 5. In response to the prophet's prayer, his eyes are opened that he may see the great angelic host which God has sent for their defence. 6. The magnanimity of the man of God is manifested toward his intended centers who fall into his power. captors who fall into his power.

OUR UNSEEN HELPERS.

Prophetic Warnings. The miraculous cure of the commander-in-chief of the Syrian forces, and the kindness manifested by Israel's prophet, should have deterred Benhadad from further warfare with that country, but the gratitude of kings is shortlived, and within a few years hostilities were renewed. Benhadad held secret councils of war and planned ambuscades so that he might surprise the enemy. But God manifested His protecting care over His people through Elisha, who would warn the king of Israel, "Beware that thou pass not such a place, for thither the Syrians are come down." The scouts sent out by Jehoram upon the receipt of these messages always found Elisha's warnings well founded. Thrice the prophet saved king Jehoram and his army from surprise and disaster.

The Mystery Explained. Benhadad did not know that these warnings were from God, and he was troubled. Indeed, he was terrible in his wrath; there must be a traitor in the camp, for how else could the king of Israel obtain his knowledge of the plans of the Syrians, and be prepared for every sortie? But his favorite commander declared, "None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speak-

est in thy bed chamber.'

The explanation seemed feasible, for Benhadad remembered Naaman's miraculous cure, and was willing to believe that a man who possessed the magic power to cure leprosy could also read the king's thoughts in his bed chamber. Immediately the wily

ing a captive of His prophet and bringing him to Samaria, where he could do no further mischief. The king turned toward the officer who had proffered the explanation, and ordered him to "Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him."

An Unfortunate Dilemma. Though he is not mentioned, it must have been Naaman himself who stood before the king, since no one else had such definite knowledge of Israel's prophet, and such an order would only be given to the commander of the Syrian forces, which position Naaman held.

Without doubt, the Syrian's gratitude and conversion were unfeigned, but he was an ambitious man, and in order to retain the favor of his royal master he had desired immunity to bow before idols when in the king's presence. The privilege was not granted, though the prophet bade him "Go in peace." Perhaps Elisha hoped the new convert would gain sufficient courage to openly avow God before Benhadad and his court, but cowardice grows like any other sin, and we find no record of such an avowal on Naaman's part. In fact, concealment has caused the Syrian commander to grow so faint-hearted that the man who feared to confess God is now afraid to avow his friendship for Elisha.

It may have been one of the sad consequences of Gehazi's sin that his importunity and acceptance of Naaman's gifts created a distrust of Elisha's sincerity, causing the Syrian to believe that the prophet was, after all, only a magic worker of superior power. and cooling Naaman's ardor and zeal for Benhadad thought to outwit God by mak- | the true God. If his sin caused a new convert to stumble, we can better understand the severity of Gehazi's punishment. Once more, with horses and chariots, Naaman starts out to find Israel's prophet, prepared to besiege Dothan, where Elisha is temporarily residing, and even to raze it to the ground in the attempt to capture the man to whose good offices he is indebted for health, life, and all he enjoys. It is an unwelcome duty, but he dare not oppose his royal master. However, Naaman need not fear, for God will take care of His own.

True Courage. Under cover of night, the Syrian host encamped upon the plains about Dothan. The young man who was Elisha's attendant rose early and when he went forth on his duties, "Behold, an host compassed the city with horses and chariots." As the servant of Elisha, the young man undoubtedly believed in God, but when his belief was put to a practical test, and he saw the enemy encamped about the town, and learned their errand, he was panic-stricken, and rushed in to Elisha, crying, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" The poor youth thought salvation from the danger that threatened them depended on their own effort. But Elisha knew that his God was near, and though the Syrian king's army were ten times as great, it could not thwart God's purpose.

With that quiet, kingly dignity which distinguished him, he soothed the youth's fears, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." What could the prophet mean? Did he not know that the village of Dothan could not turn out a hundred able-bodied men? Why, then, did his master make such a boast? The youth turned his incredulous gaze upon the prophet, and was abashed by Elisha's calmness in the face of such danger.

Eyes Opened. The prophet was unmoved because he knew whence help cometh. With his physical vision he could see no farther than his young attendant. But he knew that God would not desert him in the time of peril, and he was confident that where there was danger, there was deliverance. Elisha's faith did not need to be strengthened by a Heavenly vision, but for the sake of his attendant he prayed, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." Wonderful faith of the man of God, who did not pray that help should be sent. He knew it was there.

"And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." With eyes opened the youth saw the spiritual help sent by God and to him. It bore a

resemblance to the earthly force which menaced them, only superior in brightness and splendor and numbers. Ah, the comfort and strength and protection we all might derive from the spiritual forces about us, if we could but see! Never again would the youth doubt God's power to protect and defend His own. Now he knows why the quiet man by his side is unmoved by the number and strength of the enemy. He realizes why this unpretentious man of God is able to work miracles, even to cleanse the leper and raise the dead. Did he not live so near to God that all the host of God wrought with him?

Eyes Closed. As the Syrians marched toward the two, Elisha prayed a second time, and this time he asked, "Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness," and they became as men who could not see, and followed their prophet-guide ten miles to Samaria, where, in answer to Elisha's prayer, their eyes were opened, and they saw how God had outwitted the machinations of man. Instead of the prophet being their prisoner, they were in his power, and he led them into the very presence of the king of Israel, where the great-hearted Elisha refused to take advantage of the helplessness of those who would have taken him captive. When the king would have slain them, the prophet declared that the lives of men who had been placed in their hands through the power of God should be considered sacred.

If Naaman was indeed the leader of the Syrian forces on this expedition, we may imagine his guilty consternation at this miracle. How he must have seen his own blindness, in failing to fearlessly and openly avow God! How black his own temerity in obeying the king's order against his old-time benefactor, must have seemed in contrast with the prophet's magnanimity! At Elisha's command they were feasted by the king of Israel and sent on their way to Damascus. "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." May it not have been due to the intervention of Naaman, who, in gratitude for the long sufferance of God, returned to his king with renewed allegiance to the true God, and unwonted courage to stand firmly for the right?

stand firmly for the right?

Quiz: 1. How did Elisha become cognizant of the movements of the Syrian army? 2. Why was the prophet unaffrighted? 3. Does the Bible teach a belief in angels? 4. What great realm was opened to the young attendant's vision? 5. May we likewise claim God's protecting care?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Thoughts cannot be hidden from God. 2. One man and God are greater than all the king's armies. 3. Elisha did not need to see the angels; he knew they were there. 4. There is a greater and more beautiful world than the one seen through human vision. 5. Every true believer is surrounded by the same spiritual force that defended the prophet of old. 6. It is but a thin partition that divides the material from the spiritual. 7. The servant of God need not fear if he is in the performance of duty. 8. "The best laid plans of mice and men, gang aft aglee."

MARGARET WINTEINGER.

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.

And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the



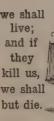
and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the



and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the



of the Syrians: if they save us alive



And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the



of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of



and a noise
of horses,
even the
noise of a
great host:
and they
said one to
another, Lo,
the king of
Israel hath
hired against
us the



of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.

Wherefore they arose, and fled in the twilight, and left their

even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. Thev took therefore



and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan; and, lo, all the way was full of



which the Syrians had cast away in their haste: and the messengers



and told the king. And the people

and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was



for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord. 2 KINGS 7: 7, 14-16.

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THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS, 7:1-16.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Give us believing hearts that we may trust Thee not only to give bread in time of famine, but for the spiritual bread with which to feed our famished souls. However dark and distressing the times, may we never doubt Thy Word. We ask it for Thy glory. Amen.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter. And He will make it plain.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, about 886 B. C. Place, Samaria. Persons, The king of Israel, Elisha, a Samaritan lord, and some lepers.

Scripture Setting: The Scoffer. Numbered with the unrighteous, Psa. 1:1. A sign of folly, Prov. 1:22. The sin of scoffing, Prov. 24:9. Punishment of the scoffer, Isa. 29:20. Wilful ignorance of scoffers, 2 Pet. 3:3-5.

Life and Conduct Setting: In the siege of Sa-

maria we find: 1. A vivid picture of the horrors of war. 2. A faithless and fickle king. 3. A true servant of the living God, who is unmoved in the midst of famine and danger. 4. A scoffer reproved. 5. A manifestation of the Lord's mercy to His people even though undeserving. 6. Famine superseded by plenty through the Word of God.
7. The high and the humble used to fulfill His purpose.
8. The scoffer's punishment.

A FAMINE ENDED IN A NIGHT.

The Besieged City. Again Benhadad made war upon Israel, directing his energies against Samaria. The once proud city was in a pitiable condition. Outside its gates a besieging army lived in splendor and luxury; within its walls, famine and starvation. For months the great Syrian host had encamped without the city, foraging and impoverishing the surrounding country and cutting off all supplies from Samaria. With an exhausted treasury and without reinforcements or allies and with pestilence and death denuding its population, from human viewpoint, the city was doomed.

A siege is not an uncommon method of warfare, but only one who has undergone the experience can realize its horrors, for the moral consequences of a prolonged siege are unspeakable. Hunger unmans and starvation brutalizes a human being. It is not for naught that we pray, "Give us our daily bread," for the lack of bread destroys all natural affection. In Samaria, as King Jehoram learned during a walk through its streets, under the brutalizing dominion of hunger, mothers had eaten their own children and were trading in the flesh of their offspring.

A Weak King. The dreadful story so astounded the king that he rent his clothes, revealing the sackcloth which he was wearing underneath to appease God and win His favor and succor. But under the sackcloth was a heart that was hard, unjust and impenitent. In an outburst of passion, the royal wearer of sackcloth charged Elisha with their misfortunes and swore with an oath that the prophet's head should come off that very day, and even sent a messenger to fulfill the threat. It was in accordance with the changeful nature of Jehoram that ere the messenger reached Elisha, the king had repented of his threat and himself set out with his royal retinue, to countermand the order, arriving at Elisha's house shortly after the messenger.

King and Prophet Meet. Just as God enabled him to read Benhadad's thoughts in his bed chamber, as soon as it was uttered, the king's threat was known to Elisha, who sat in his house discoursing with the elders of Samaria, as unmoved as when the Syrian host was encamped about Dothan to take him prisoner. As he stood in Elisha's presence, the unstable Jehoram charged the consequences of his own sin and incapacity upon God, and irritably exclaimed, "Behold this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

The calm, courageous man of God turned upon the childish, petulant king. It was a tragic moment; the man who confronted royalty so calmly was under sentence of death; the executioner was present; the king stood leaning on the arm of one of his courtiers irresolute as to whether to order the execution or not, while the elders had retired to the background to await the outcome. The utmost indifference and calmness marked the man whose life hung in the balance. He seemed enveloped in unconscious grandeur and at the sound of his voice, a deep solemnity fell upon those present, "Hear ye the Word of the Lord."

'Tomorrow about this Beyond Reason. time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria." A measure or "seel" was equal to about a peck and a half, and a shekel to two dollars and a half. It was a bold declaration, that within a day there should be such a drop

in the price of flour and barley, when the cost of these commodities had been absolutely prohibitive throughout the siege. Such a thing was impossible. Nevertheless it was the Word of the Lord. God had spoken through His prophet and the tidings should have brought joy and praise and thanksgiving.

Jehoram, for whose deliverance the power of God had been so often manifest and who had been relieved from many emergencies by Elisha, received the prophet's message in silence, and even permitted his court favorite to scoff and jeer at the promise of God. The nobleman turned sneeringly to Elisha, "Behold if the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be?" Elisha had borne with the honest doubts of his young attendant and prayed for his enlightenment, but here was a scoffer, who not only doubted but re-jected and reviled God's Word, setting his own understanding above that of the Almighty. He turned to the haughty lord and slowly uttered these words, "Behold thou shalt see it with thine eves. but shalt not eat thereof."

Risking the Chances. The four despised lepers who sat at the entrance of the city gate, discussing what method would most surely prolong their miserable existence, had no idea that God was using them for the fulfillment of prophecy. Poor, pitiable objects they were, subsisting upon the refuse thrown outside the city wall. Famine had left them to die of starvation. Lepers were not allowed inside the city, but driven desperate by hunger, they were tempted to defy the law which made them outcasts and enter the city in search of food, for "Why should they sit there and die?" If they entered the city they would find naught save famine and death. There was just one chance. They might desert to the Syrians with a possibility that they might be re-ceived in the camp; even if the Syrians should fall upon them and kill them, they could but die, and any death would be preferable to the slow torture of starvation.

How It Came to Pass. Now at the very time the lepers stole out to seek the Syrians the Lord caused a great noise to be heard in the Syrian camp, which sounded like the noise of horses and chariots and of a great host of soldiery. Thinking it was caused by the arrival of reinforcements for the beleaguered city, the great Syrian army fled to a man. They even left their army ac-

coutrements, tents and animals and fled for their lives.

Silently and under cover of night the four lepers stole into the Syrian camp. Tent after tent was deserted, with the evening meal untouched. They ate and drank, satisfying their hunger, then seeing the rich furniture, the golden bowls and drinking cups, the gold bracelets and chains worn by military dandies, and even bags of gold and silver coin, they eagerly gathered up what booty they could, hiding it and returning for more until shame and fear drove them back to the city to spread the good tidings.

Prophecy Fulfilled. The news spread like wildfire and was carried to the king, in the middle of the night. Despite Elisha's prophecy of the day before, Jehoram persisted in thinking it a ruse of the enemy, and was reluctant to send messengers to verify the truth of the lepers' story. But it was true. The Lord had fulfilled His Word spoken by His prophet. People and soldiery were soon carrying off Syrian booty, not only the silver and gold, but what was at the time more precious-stores of provisions, selling food inside the city gate or market place. "So a measure of flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the prophet."

"Truly God is no respector of persons. As He used the loathsome, repulsive lepers to fulfil His Word so He made king Jehoram the instrument through which Elisha's words concerning the king's favorite should come to pass. Anticipating the rush for food, Jehoram appointed that nobleman to superintend the distribution of the provisions, and so great was the press that he was trampled under foot by the eager rushing crowd and died. The scoffer had seen the Word of God verified, but it had availed him nothing. All too true had proved the prophet's words, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes but shalt not eat thereof."

Was Jehoram a weak or a strong king? Why did he impute their misfortunes to Elisha?
 Was this just? 4. Why is it wrong to scoff at religion? 5. Name other scoffers in the Bible and state their end. 6. Why may we always trust the promises of the Lord?

Seed Thoughts. 1. War is always brutalizing. 2. A comparison between a weak king and a strong man is always advantageous to the latter. There is a great difference between a doubter and a scoffer; the one seeks wisdom, the other repudiates it. 4. He who scoffs at sacred things always ends disastrously. 5. God's promises are always realized. 6. He who could end a food famine can relieve soul hunger. 7. God not only gives fine flour and barley in plentitude, but is Himself the bread of life to famishing souls.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

JEHU THE KING

And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the



that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains,



Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they

with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. And they



out of the house of Baal, and



And they brake down the:



of Baal, and



of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS, 10:15-28.

Prayer: Dear Lord, We thank Thee that we live under the reign of love; that Christ's coming has brought peace on earth and turned the tyranny of kings. May we never mistake zeal and self-interest for true piety, nor render Thee half-hearted service. We ask it in the name of Christ. Amen.

The love of God is broader

Than the measure of man's mind;

And the heart of the Eternal

Is most wonderfully kind.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 882. Place, Samaria. Persons, Jehu, king of Israel; Jehonadab, the Rechabite; and worshippers of Baal.

Scripture Setting: The Sin of Idolatry. Com-

Scripture Setting: The Sin of Idolatry. Commandments against idol worship, Ex. 20:3-5. Idolatry forbidden, Lev. 26:1. Forms of idolatry, Deut. 4:15-19. Death penalty, Deut. 17:2-7. Idolators confounded, Psa. 97:7. Warning against idolatry, 1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:21. Idolatry defined, Col. 3:5.

Life and Conduct Setting: In this lesson, 1. Jehu, an unscrupulous zealot, combines selfish interests with religious zeal. 2. Fearing Elisha's disapproval Jehu avoids the prophet and seeks

the support of the good but bigoted Jehonadab. 3. Professing zeal for God, but largely influenced by the desire to secure his own dynasty, he plans to destroy the worshippers of Baal. 4. Instead of following the God-inspired Elijah's bold defiance of Baal's prophets, Jehu uses duplicity and entraps the idolators. 5. He orders their massacre, thereby gaining complete riddance of the supporters of Ahab. 6. He proves the falsity of his claim to act as God's agent, by worshipping the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. 7. Good is wrought out of evil in the downfall of Baal worship throughout Israel.

AN UNSCRUPULOUS ZEALOT.

Jehu the King. How many who speak of "driving like Jehu" know that they are using a phrase extant three thousand years ago, concerning a man noted for his furious and reckless driving? The Jehu, whose mode of driving thus has become immortalized, is the chief personage of our lesson. Whatever his faults and crime, no one can doubt Jehu's strength of character. He was a man of action rather than of words. His unbounding energy, desperate courage, decision, firmness and thoroughness made him a marked man very early in his career, and while he was still a young man, God chose him for the overthrow of the house of Ahab. and told Elijah to anoint him as the future king of Israel. But the anointing was deferred many years and finally performed by Elisha through a young prophet.

He was anointed for stern and harsh duty. The occasion demanded a patriot, destitute of self-interest, humbly obedient to God and an example of righteousness to his countrymen. Had Jehu been such a man, today his name might stand with William of Orange, Luther and Washington instead of being significant only of reckless driving. For there can be no doubt that at the time of his call, Jehu was a worshipper of Jehovah, with unusual fitness for the great responsibilities imposed upon him; but he regarded the trust as only an opportunity for self-advancement and self-aggrandizement. It was all too apparent that in his dealings with Ahab's descendants he acted not so much as the executioner of God's judgment against a wicked dynasty, as for his own self-protection.

Jehu and Jehonadab. But though actuated by self-interest, Jehu was performing God's judgment upon the wicked Ahab and the vacilating Jehoram fell a victim to his treachery. When Ahab's descendants were utterly destroyed, Jehu planned a greater strategy. Ahab had identified himself with Baal worship and naturally the adherents of that form of idolatry were friendly to his dynasty. If Jehu could effect their extermination he would be wholly rid of every unfriendly influence, while he would gain a name for piety through the destruction of Baal worshipers in the land of Israel.

Fearless and self-reliant as Jehu was, he felt the need of an ally whose reputation for piety would give countenance to so questionable an undertaking. He dared not send for Elisha, for he well knew that the prophet would not uphold falsehood and treachery. Driving to Samaria with his usual furious haste, he met Jehonadab, the son of Rechab. There could not have been a greater contrast than that between these two men. Jehu was an unscrupulous, ambitious man of the world, while Jehonadab had withdrawn from the world in protest against its corruption and luxury; as chieftain of the Rechabites, he laid the entire tribe under a vow that they would drink no wine, plant no vineyards, avoid the evils of city life, and keep themselves free from worldly entanglements by dwelling in tents all their days. And this remarkable man impressed his views so strongly upon his followers that they adhered to the vow for centuries, and to this day there are those who follow his austere example.

As the royal chariot dashed along at the usual mad rate, they came upon the desert sheik, who was on his way to meet Jehu. With his usual promptitude and brevity, Jehu saluted him and asked with blunt directness, "Is thine heart right as my heart is with thy heart?" With even greater brevity the stern-faced tribesman replied, "It is." Ratifying the covenant of friendship with a hand clasp, Jehu took Jehonadab into his chariot and sought to ingratiate himself with him by boasting of his piety, saying, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord,"

The Zeal of Jehu. So subtle a vice is selfdeception that Jehu had actually convinced himself that he was a disinterested patriot acting only in obedience to God, as he planned the massacre of all the Baal worshipers. It is true that God demanded the uprooting of idolatry from among the Israelites, in order that they might perpetuate the worship of the true God. But how much more it would have been in accordance with the long sufferance and mercy of God if Jehu had called upon the people to repent and return to the true God, and have executed judgment only on those who persisted in cleaving to their idols. Instead Jehu conceived a plan so treacherous and evil that God has condemned it through His prophet. Hosea. Did he think that God needed man's lies, that he began with a lie on his lips? "Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu will serve him much." Then he appointed a great day of sacrifice to Baal and sent a proclamation broadcast through the land, accompanied with the threat that all who should absent themselves should not live.

The Assemblage. There had been much conjecture and no little apprehension as to the new king's religion. For though anointed by Jehovah's prophet, like many professors of religion, he was seldom or never seen in the Lord's house, and served God only when it advanced his own interest. The followers of Baal were triumphant over the proclamation, whose brevity and boldness were so characteristic of the real Jehu.

Many who formerly worshipped Baal secretly now came out in the open, and on the great day the house of Baal was full from one end to the other. Every precaution was taken to have only Baal's worshippers, and they were given special robes for the occasion that they might be distinguished from worshippers of the true God. Amid an uproar of applause, Jehu and Jehonadab entered the vast assemblage; it was evident to the multitude that Baal's ranks were to be recruited by the accession of the austere chieftain, else why was he present on such an occasion? Why, indeed,

unless inspired by ignorance of the love of Godf The Massacre. Jehu so little understood what it meant to be a true follower of Jehovah that he took added precautions to assure himself that none of the servants of the Lord were present. Having reassured himself that only the followers of Baai were there, he assembled his guards and warned them on the peril of their lives to let no man escape.

Again there is shouting, and great acclamation. The king serves as high priest to Baal, offering in all probability human sacrifice! It was Baal's hour of triumph. The burnt offering is ended and the treacherous Jehu drives captains and guard, fast and furiously as he drives his chariot, "Go in and slay them; let none come forth." Let a curtain be drawn mercifully over the awful scene. We can only thank the tender Saviour that we are privileged to live under the dispensation of love, and that God's followers have learned that the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

The Outcome. Jehu was never a man to leave things half done. The destruction of Baal was complete. The images were torn down from the house of Baal and burned. The pillar of Baal which was of stone could not be burned and was therefore broken to pieces. Even the house of Baal was partly destroyed, only a portion remaining as a memorial of sin and a warning of its punishment, and even that which remained was put to the greatest possible desecration; they made it a draft house to be used as a depository for the filth of the city. "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel."

Having accomplished his own ends, Jehu's zeal disappeared and instead of trying to lead Israel back to the true God, he worshipped the golden calves of Dan and Bethel because calf worship was essential to the maintenance of a divided kingdom. If it were abolished there would be no reason why Israel and Judah could not unite under one government and Jehu would become a king without a throne. Was it not another proof that Jehu was not so anxious to avenge Jehovah as he was to serve his own interests? It is a sign of the sovereignty of God that instead of allowing evil to thwart His ends the Lord utilizes evil for the fulfillment of His purpose, often making evil men the unintentional instruments in building up His Kingdom, and in this instance, Jehu's sin wrought good through the destruction of Baal worship in Israel.

Quiz. 1. What dynasty did Jehu overthrow?
2. What kings did he slay? 3. What great faults
tainted Jehu's zeal? 4. What good result was
achieved through his perfidy? 5. Name two famous massacres of modern history perpetrated under the guise of religion?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Some men's religion is so mixed with self-interest that its savor is destroyed. 2. It is not hard to serve God when inclination and duty go together. 3. Some men lay all their meanness on God. 4. God is never served by a lie. 5. God is truth and He demands truth in His servants. 6. In His work of destruction God sometimes uses evil men, but never to build up His kingdom. 7. It is only sanctified zeal that counts. 8. There are still some men who cease to be Christians when they have attained their own ends.

MARGARET WINTEINGER.

And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehojada the



commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give King David's



that
were
in the
temple
of the
Lord.
And the
guard
stood,
every
man
with his



round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple And he brought forth the king's son, and put the



and gave
him the
testimony;
and they
made
him
king,
and
anointed
him;
and they



and said, God save the king.

II KINGS XI: 9-12.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS, 11:9-17. ALSO 2 CHRON, 23:1-16.

Prayer: Dear Lord, We thank Thee that Thou hast preserved us in the years of helpless infancy and childhood. May we ever remember with gratitude those who ministered to us during those years. Help us to honor their teaching and Thy name. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

See Israel's gentle Shepherd stands, With all engaging charms! Hark! how He calls the tender lambs. And folds them in His arms.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 877. Place, The temple, Jerusalem. Persons, Joash, the child king;

temple, Jerusalem. Persons, Joash, the child king; Jehoiada, the priest; Athaliah, Joash's grandmother; Jehosheba, his aunt.

Scripture Setting: Youthful Servants of the Lord. Abel, Gen. 4:4. Joseph, Gen. 39:3. Moses, Heb. 11:23-24. David, 1 Sam. 16:11-12. John, Luke 1:66, 80. Timothy, 2 Tim. 1:5.

Life and Conduct Setting: The history of Joash records 1. God's preserving care over dangers that beset infancy. 2. The contrast between a good and a bad woman. 3. The devoted and faithful service of Jehoiada, the priest of God. 4. The crowning of the boy king. 5. The retribution which befell Athaliah, the usurper. 6. The triple covenant with God, the king and people.

A BOY RULER.

A Child of Royalty. Only recently the world was watching the boy king of Spain; and the baby emperor of China with the government of two hundred million people resting on his puny infant shoulders, has been a pathetic and interesting figure. The remarkable preservation of his infant life and his youth when crowned, makes Joash one of the most interesting of Judah's kings. Never did a child have greater handicaps and greater advantages. He was the great-grandson of that wicked royal couple, king Ahab and queen Jezebel; with a grandfather so weak and wicked and such a failure as king that he was buried without kingly honors, while his grandmother excelled both her wicked parents in cruelty and sin. His father, who was no better than his evil ancestors, was slain by Jehu, at the early age of twenty-two. In order to secure the throne for herself, his grandmother ordered the massacre of every one even remotely descended from David, not even sparing her own grandchildren. Surely there could be no greater misfortune than descent from such a line; besides the sentence of death hung over his baby head. But we shall see how God manifested His protecting power in behalf of this unhappy child of royalty.

The Deliverance. The heathen queen had planned with cruel certitude, but she had neglected to take into account Jehovah's promise of the perpetuity of the throne of David. Ahaziah, the baby's father, had a half-sister, Jehosheba, who was the wife of Jehoida, a priest of God. They were a godly couple and Jehosheba's heart had not been corrupted and calloused by the court. The two months' old baby under cruel sentence of death appealed to her compassion, and she resolved to save it. As a king's daughter, sister of the former king, and aunt of all unconscious that the service she rendered to

the royal children, she had access to the palace at all times. Taking the child's nurse into her confidence, she stole out with baby and nurse and hid both in a room in the palace where mattresses and coverlets are Every Oriental palace contained such a store chamber, and as it was never used for aught else, they were comparatively secure from discovery, though a baby's cry might have revealed its hiding place and thereby cost the life of its rescuer.

The wicked Athaliah was neither a good wife nor a good mother. The Scriptures attribute her husband's sinful career to the fact that he "had the daughter of Ahab to wife," and declare that Ahaziah did wrong because "his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly," and her grandchildren were destroyed by her. Jehosheba was not only a good wife and mother, rearing a godly son, but also loyal in every relationship, risking her own life to save a baby nephew.

What Came of a Merciful Deed. In a few days Jehosheba took the child and its nurse from its temporary hiding place, and stole from the royal palace to the temple where. with her husband's assistance, the babe was hidden away from its murderous grandmother, and the impending massacre. Thus by her merciful act, Jehosheba become a coworker with God, assisting in the fulfillment of prophecy and prolonging the line of David unto Mary and Joseph.

Could Jehosheba know that centuries to come. another woman would with her husband's assistance, flee from a wicked king's edict and hide a Child of the house of David from another slaughter of the innocents? Though nearly a thousand years apart, the two episodes were closely allied. For only the frail infant in Jehosheba's arms stood against the extinction of the line of David; its slender thread of life held together the genealogy of the Child in Mary's arms. But Jehosheba was

one of His little ones, was in very deed unto the promised Prince of the house of David.

If the infant Joash was unfortunate in his heredity, compensation was given him; what other child was ever permitted to spend his infant years in the temple of the Lord, or was so carefully nurtured and instructed by the high priest of God?

Planning the Usurper's Overthrow. Meanwhile a heathen queen ruled over the city of David and the land of Judah, and as far as known, the royal line of David was extinct. The splendid temple erected by Solomon was neglected and in disrepair, while under its shadow a temple was built to Baal whose worship Athaliah sought to establish in the holy city and sacred land.

After six years of impatient waiting, Jehoida felt that the time was ripe to throw off the idolatrous yoke of the usurper. Joash was now a boy of seven and according to Oriental custom, of an age to be proclaimed king. Jehoida had already won the adherence of the officers of the queen's bodyguard and the five captains of the royal guards, with whom he held a secret conference in the temple, and binding them by a secret, solemn oath to fidelity to the cause of the little king, he showed them the young descendant of David. The priests, Levites and other faithful followers of Jehovah were then invited to Jerusalem. After being sworn to secrecy, they also were shown into the presence of the boy Joash, and took the oath of fealty. Guards were skillfully posted about the temple and the palace. Spears and shields which David had won in many battles and which had reposed in the temple for 150 years were brought out and given to the captains of the guard.

Long Live the King. When all was ready the little Joash was led forth to the raised platform which the kings of his line were in the habit of occupying in the temple. It was fitting that the coronation should take place on a Sabbath day, for it was a religious ceremony prompted by the highest patriotism. In the sight of all the people, Jehoida crowned the boy king, and then to show that the king was to rule by law and not according to his own will, the high priest laid a roll of the law of Moses on the child's head. Once again God's priest had anointed a lad, and the boy descendant of the ruddy faced shepherd lad was proclaimed king.

Words would fail to describe the emotion of that assemblage of tried and true followers of Jehovah. Many times in the temple, they had mournfully chanted the words

of the psalmist, "Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph?" Now might they sing in triumph, "The Lord will not east off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance." Truly God still reigned, for the psalmist's offspring sat upon the throne. "And they clapped their hands and said, God save the king."

The Triple Covenant. The walls of the temple resounded with the shouts of God's people; the cheering rang across the open space to the palace, and was Athaliah's first intimation of danger. Hurrying to the temple to learn the cause of the uproar, she saw the young king crowned, and on the platform surrounded by the royal officers and captains of her own guards; the Levite choir was chanting the coronation psalm; the temple band was playing, and trumpeters and people were joyfully acclaiming Joash king.

Small wonder that the wretched Athaliah rent her clothes and cried. Treason! Treason! But was it treason that a heathen usurper and murderess should meet her doom, Baal be overthrown and the throne of David revert to its rightful owner? Jehoida, the faithful high priest of God, had not inaugurated a revolution merely to set his wife's nephew upon the throne, but to reinstate the worship of Jehovah, and the most solemn and sacred feature of the coronation was to follow. "And Jehoida made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people." King and people were to worship God and be faithful to Him and He would protect and keep them. In token of their sincerity, the people destroyed the house of Baal, its altars and images, and the worship of the true God was restored. Thus this peaceful revolution accomplished more than Jehu's coup d'etat of treachery and slaughter.

That "Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoida the priest," and after the good man's death was led into sin through evil companions, even conniving at the death of the son of his benefactors, shows that association is more powerful than heredity.

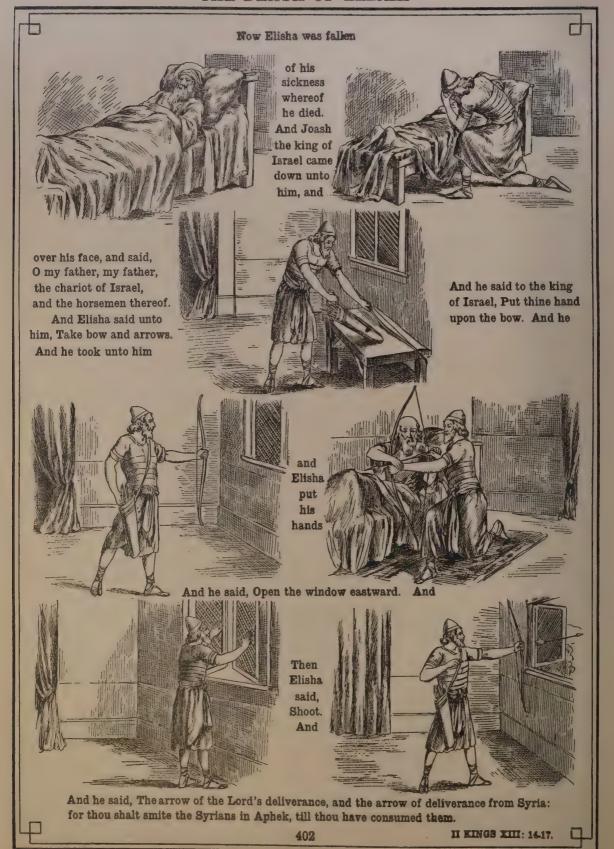
that association is more powerful than heredity.

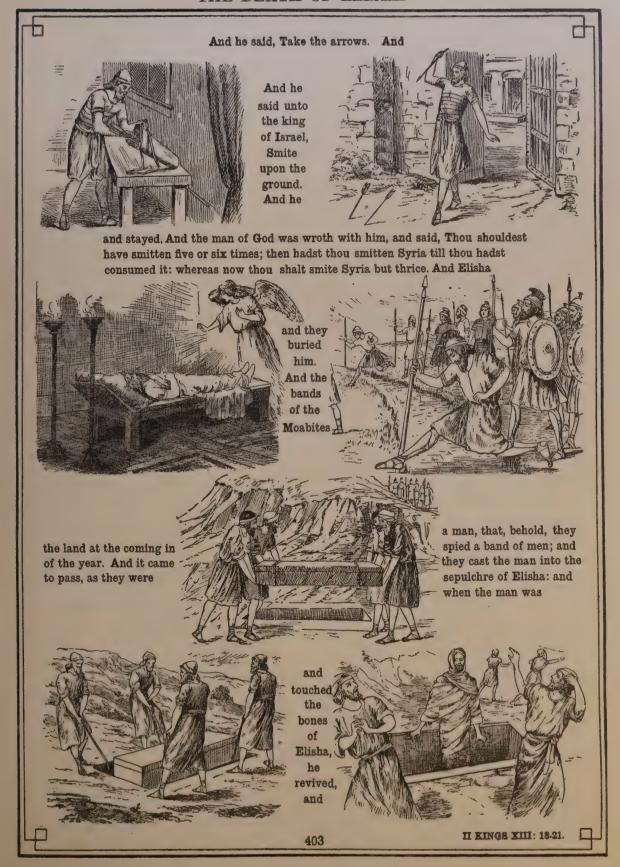
Quiz. 1. What other boy was anointed king by a prophet and priest of God? 2. What other babe in the Old Testament was saved from death by hiding it? 3. What king ordered a slaughter of innocents? 4. How was the life of the Child Jesus preserved? 5. Does God still exert a guardian care over children? 6. Which was the truest reformer, Jehu or Jehoida?

reformer, Jehu or Jehoida?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Perils and danger face every infant life. 2. Jehovah guards the cradle of every slumbering babe. 3. A bad woman destroys, a good woman preserves life. 4. An evil heredity does not predestine its possessor to evil. 5. Heredity may be overcome by education and environment. 6. We cannot choose our ancestry, but we may pick our associates. 7. Retribution always outrides and overtakes the criminal. 8. A royal dynasty was saved from destruction and God's Word upheld, through one merciful act.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.





THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 2 KINGS, 13:14-21.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Grant us grace to meet Thy summons calmly. May it find us prepared and ready. Help us so to live, that even after death, our influence shall live on and have a vivifying effect upon souls that are dead in sin. For Thy glory. Amen.

"Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime, And, departing, leave behind us Footprints on the sands of time."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 842. Place, hunem. Persons, Elisha and Joash, king of Shunem. Israel.

Scripture Setting: The Death of the Righteous. Greatly to be desired, Num. 23:10. Precious in the sight of the Lord, Psa. 116:15. They enter into peace, Isa. 57:1-2. They have hope in death, Prov. 14:32. Are sustained and comforted in death, Psa. 23:4. God's presence in death, Psa. 48.14. Vic-23:4. God's presence in death, Psa. 48.14. Victorious in death, Isa. 5:8, 1 Cor. 15:56-57. Shall live again, Isa. 26:19. Depart to be with Christ, Phil. 1:21-23. Borne to Heaven by angels, Luke 16:22. Their Heavenly reward, Dan. 12:2-3. They receive a crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. 4:8.

Life and Conduct Setting: In this beautiful account of the death of God's servant, 1. Elisha's greatness is manifested in death as in life. 2. Royalty visits him and mourns his departure. 3. The prophet sees visions unto the last. 4. He tries to comfort the king who grieves for him and to inspire him with his own courage and determination. 5. Joash is too easily satisfied. 6. The dying prophet has courage still to rebuke a king. 7. The greatest and godliest man in Israel meets the common lot of all. 8. Elisha's miraculous power extends beyond the confines of death. 9. The dead prophet's touch restores life.

THE DEPARTURE OF A GREAT MAN.

The End Approaches. The greatest man in all Israel lay dying. It is doubtful if there is a darker record in all the pages of history than is contained in the two books of the Kings. Murder and treason, craft and greed, deadly ambition and cruel ingratitude, lust and jealousy, fury and hate, are all marshaled before us. Even the tragedies of Shakespeare pale before the unbridled lust depicted in the ancient Hebrew record. And nowhere is there such a record of great men: the wisest of all times, master builders, great military commanders, real heroes and good soldiers, statesmen unexcelled in our present day, diplomats and financiers; but the unvarnished and truthful record reveals some fatal weakness, or a strain of evil in the greatest and best.

History testifies that sinful and black as is the record of God's chosen people, the rest of mankind were unspeakably worse and the outside world infinitely blacker. The dark pages of the two sacred books are illumined by two characters, whose spotlessness and moral grandeur are in striking contrast to their times. Both were prophets of God. The one, austere and solitary, seemed not of ordinary flesh and blood and in his departure was untouched by death, ascending to Heaven by way of the fiery chariot instead of the tomb.

But the other was so intensely human, so broad in his sympathies, so lowly of heart, so ready to help, so simple and open in his life, that he was not only the greatest, but the best loved man in the entire nation. He was a "man who lived by the roadside," and the lives of the humble and great con-

verged at his door. Now he was sick unto death. The one to whom kings had come for deliverance; at whose command nature had reversed her laws; and to whom death itself had yielded its prey, must fulfill the common law of man and die. Like the Holy One in whose power he wrought, though, "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

A Royal Visitor. To live so that one will be mourned by one's enemies as well as by one's friends, and by the heads of the nation in unison with the simple folk of the community, proves a life well spent. Elisha lay in the chamber which had been built for him by the Shunamite couple and was the object of their loving ministration, while the entire community joined with the great lady of Shunem in mourning his fast approaching end. It was the close of a long life. More than sixty years ago, he had left the plow at Elijah's call and now he was past eighty. He had not been active in public affairs lately, for Jehu had ignored him, and though Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, must have come to Elisha in defeat, when the great-hearted prophet besought and won God's help for him, the ungrateful king who so easily forgot his Divine Benefactor, soon slighted His prophet.

And now king Joash, grandson of Jehu, reigned in Israel. Though an evil man, Joash mourned Elisha's illness and came down from Samaria to Shunem to visit the dying prophet. Doubtless many times the king had been angry and smarted under the prophet's rebuke; but as he looked at the wan face and gaunt and pain-racked body, and noted the evidence of approaching death, the king threw himself down by the bedside and bent over the glorified face of the man of God until it was wet with his own hot tears.

A King's Tribute. Infinitely tender was the tribute of the worldly but sorrowing king. "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof." Strangely enough it was the very expression which Elisha had used when, sixty years ago, he had seen Elijah, his beloved master, ascending to Heaven in a chariot of fire. Then, it had seemed to the bereft young prophet as if Israel had been shorn of its protection: as if the horses and chariot and armies of Israel were naught since he who wrought their victories was gone. Faithfully the youthful follower of Elijah had tried to wear his master's mantle, fill his place and perform the office of prophet to his people, and now in his old age and ere his departure, king Joash's exclamation was the assurance of his success. And were the king's eyes opened, even as the young attendant's had been? And was the chariot of God not nigh to protect His servant in death as in life?

His Last Prophecy. Like God, who hates sin and loves the sinner, Elisha's heart was filled with compassion for the man by his side. Was not Joash his king, and did not the salvation of Israel depend upon his determination, courage and persistence against its foes?

Elisha was no selfish recluse, and dying though he was he still had the welfare of his country at heart. Magnificent courage, that with the death damp gathering on his forehead, leads the prophet to rouse the king, energizes him and inspires him with hope and courage. Dying, Elisha was more alive than Joash. Summoning all his fast waning strength, he raised up on the bed, and with eyes alight with prophetic fire, he bade the young and stalwart king take his bow and arrows, and the king obeyed. "Put thine hand upon the bow." The words rang with the old authority, and the king did as he was told. Then Elisha put his own hands upon the king's hands, for Joash must not think he can win without God's help. The window was opened and the king awaited orders. "Shoot. And he shot." It was an ancient method of declaring war; when an arrow shot by a herald, or spear thrown into the country to be invaded with the words, "I wage war against you," was sufficient declaration of warlike intentions.

The Rebuke. Wonderingly Joash turned to Elisha, who explained that the arrow shot eastward into the air was the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, pledging deliverance from the yoke of Syria. The prophet bade the king smite with other arrows, this time to the ground, as if smiting something to the earth. Joash smote as commanded once, twice, thrice, and then possibly regarding the whole proceeding as a sick man's fancy, he stopped. Terrible in his indignation was

the dying prophet, who, fearless to the end, again rebuked royalty. "Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice." His quiver was not empty. If Joash had believed the promise of God, he would have used every arrow, for was not the power of God behind his every effort?

Outlives Death. Perhaps this one supreme effort in behalf of his country hastened the end, for shortly after, death claimed the greatest man of all Israel. Every honor was paid the dead prophet and his body reposed in a great vaulted sepulchre hewn out of solid rock. Josephus tells us he had a magnificent funeral and burial. But greater honor than his people could give was accorded him later, for God attested the genuineness of his calling. A remarkable miracle was wrought to proclaim to Israel that the word and work of a truly good man outlives death.

While ravaging the country a band of marauding Moabites came suddenly upon a funeral. According to Israelitish custom, the dead man was wrapped in linen cloths and was being borne to the tomb by his friends. But alas, they could not hope to escape if they carried the corpse to the grave prepared for it. Elisha's sepulchre was hard by. The distressed mourners quickly rolled away the stone and hastily thrust in the dead body. And, miraculous power of God, triumphant over death;—as soon as the dead touched the uncoffined bones of the prophet he was restored to life and stood upon his feet! The miracle which in life the man of God had wrought only after much prayer and entreaty, was now accomplished without effort. Moreover the prophet's prediction to Joash was literally fulfilled. Three times, and three times only, did Joash defeat the Syrians. Death was powerless to stay the word and work of a true servant of God.

Quiz. 1. How did Elisha depart from the world?
2. How much longer did Elisha serve as prophet than Elijah. 3. Was the king Joash of our lesson the Joash crowned king by Jehoida? 4. How long a period were the two kings of the same name contemporary rulers? 5. What weakness did Joash betray in failing to shoot longer?

Seed Truths. 1. He who trusts God may meet both danger and death unafraid. 2. Even the

Seed Truths. 1. He who trusts God may meet both danger and death unafraid. 2. Even the wicked are compelled to pay tribute to a truly good man. 3. That man has lived well whose enemies weep over his departure. 4. The arrow of the Lord's deliverance is always winged in behalf of His people. 5. Joash only asked for three victories and he got only three; had he asked for more, he would have got more. 6. Many a professed Christian stops his own efforts to reform ere God has completed His work of grace. 7. God is always ready to do more for us than we are willing to accept. 8. All Christian victories and reforms have been gained only through the perseverance of the saints. 9. A man's influence and works do not die with him.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

CAPTIVITY OF THE TEN TRIBES

Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and



it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and



Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the



of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For so it was,

that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which hath brought them up



from under the hand of



king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the



whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II KINGS 17:1-23

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Make us to know Thy will in national ways, and help us to do it. Thy ancient people are examples to us. Their sins and their punishments were alike dreadful. May the idolatries of wealth and the luxuries of life not ensnare us, and may we ever heed Thy calls and love Thy worship. As we read of war and devastation our hearts turn to the Prince of peace. In His name may we gain the victories of peace. For His dear sake. Amen.

"Who is wise and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, And the just shall walk in them; But transgressors shall fall therein."—Hosea 14:9.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 722-1 B. C. Place, Samaria, the capital of Israel. Persons, Hoshea the king of Israel, Hezekiah the king of Judah, Shalmaneser IV king of Assyria 727 to 722 B. C., Sargon king of Assyria 721 to 702 B. C. So king of Egypt, twenty-fifth dynasty. Hosea and Isaiah prophets. Scripture Setting: The sadness and Divine warn-

ings of the lesson cannot be understood without the help of the great prophets of the period. Read The drunkards of Ephraim, Isa. 28. The seven-fold woe, Isa. 6:8-28. God's controversy with Israel, Hosea 4:1-10. Reaping the whirlwind, Hosea 7 and 8. The commandment against idolatry, Exodus 20:1-6.

Life and Conduct Setting: This lesson is peculiarly sad because it brings us to the end of a long period of wrongdoing on the part of the northern kingdom. And it is peculiarly rich in value as a warning against national wrongdoing, for as an evil tree bears bitter fruit so a sinful nation must come to a bad end. It was a political blunder on the part of king Hoshea that brought the climax just as a touch may spring a trap that has long been set. He refused his yearly tribute to the king of Assyria, and foolishly sought the help of Egypt. Shalmaneser rebuked this rebellion by at once besieging Samaria, and in the terrors of war king Hoshea paid an awful tribute.

THE ROAD TO RUIN.

Point of Contact. As a nation we are not in danger of such gross idolatry as that which ruined ancient Israel. Their rude stone and wooden gods; their Baalim and Asherim and groves and high places; their calf worship and sun and star worship; their bloody altars and their sacrifices of beasts and boys and girls have passed away forever. But we have idols of pleasure and of gold and of the market-place that are equally dangerous. Among us also there are drunkards, and we have an altar of lust on which thousands are sacrificed, and to the god of gold we pay heavy tribute through our trusts and monopolies. Our future is a question of Christ and Christliness against such altars and such gods.

"Thorns and Thistles on Their Altars." "Samaria is cut off with her king as foam upon the water." This is the cry of Hosea as he foretells the destruction of the city which was the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It is a figure both sad and beautiful. In his tenth chapter the prophet goes further and rebukes the idolatry of the people, saying, "The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed; the thorn and thistle shall come up on their altars." It would be hard to think of anything more desolate than thistles growing on and around the altars where thousands had been coming to sacrifice their rams and lambs and oxen to their gods. It is a picture that describes the utter destruction of the nation.

In the early part of his reign king Hoshea

of Assyria, and paid him tribute year by year. As long as he was loval all went well. But Hoshea was a weak king and in an evil moment yielded to the fanatical Egyptian party and cut off his yearly tribute or tax to Shalmaneser and made an alliance with So the king of Egypt. Perhaps Shalmaneser was wanting a pretext for war, and if so he could have had nothing better than such a rebellion on the part of Hosea. He promptly besieged the city of Samaria and continued the siege through three terrible years, and at last destroyed it, and carried its people away into slavery, and thus with the high hand of a merciless despot collected his tribute.

Plowing Wickedness, Reaping Iniquity. A problem confronted the writer of our lesson. Jehovah was a God above all gods, and yet His chosen people had been destroyed. Could He not have saved them? Why had He cast them off? Why had He sent that dreadful enemy against them?

In verses seven to twenty-seven He gives His answer. It is found in one word; it was their sin. And their sin consisted in hardnecked, unreasoning idolatry. That was their root sin. On the hilltops and under the green trees all over the land they had placed their idols and built their altars, and they were worshiping just as the heathen worshiped. They sang heathen songs and danced heathen dances around their smoking altars. Much of this worship was shameful and cruel. They even threw their boys and girls had become subject to Shalmaneser the king I into the fires of Moloch, for human sacrifice was a part of Moloch worship. These were the things that "provoked God to anger." He had spoken to them by all His prophets, but they had not heard Him. At last in His anger He had removed them out of His sight. This is how, according to the fine figure of Hosea, they had "plowed wickedness;" in their utter destruction at the hands of Shalmaneser they were "reaping iniquity."

Associated Sins. Sins are like grapes; they grow in clusters. In Israel idolatry was the stem sin, and it had many other sins clinging to it. One of the worst of these is pointed out by Isaiah in his 28th chapter, in the cry, "Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim." They had a rich land with "fat valleys," and hillsides covered with vineyards; and from their grapes they made wine, and became drunkards. They had been living lives of careless luxury, and gluttony, and drunkenness for a long time. A half century before Isaiah, Amos had rebuked them for "lolling on couches, eating the fat of the flocks, singing idle songs, and drinking wine out of bowls." The prophets knew that such ways of living could not last. Isaiah warned them that their "glorious beauty" would be like a "fading flower," and that the nation itself would be ere long like the first ripe fig on a tree—quickly caten.

The Links of History Run Far Back. Meditating still on the problem of Israel's rejection by Jehovah the writer of our lesson vv. 19 to 23, recalls the sin of Jeroboam two hundred and fifty years before. It was this "son of Nebat" who had made Israel to "sin a great sin." It was he who had turned them away from following Jehovah, and all through those long years the people had been walking in the sins of that royal sinner. "They departed not from them." And so King Sargon wrote on the tablets of Khorsabad, "I besieged and took and occupied the city of Samaria, and carried into captivity twenty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty of its inhabitants. I changed the former government of this country, and placed over it lieutenants of my own. And Sebeh (So), sultan of Eg5pt, came against me to Raphia to fight against me. They met me and I routed them—Sebeh fied."

Rebellion and Ruin. When we remember the history of Israel as a nation and reflect on its awful destruction it does not seem too much to couple these two words together, namely rebellion and ruin. The national rebellion was rebellion against God. He was the real ruler of that people. He had watched over them with kingly care even while they were slaves in Egypt; He had brought them out miraculously, opening a path for them through the Red Sea, overthrowing their enemies- "the horse and his rider"-amidst the waves where they had walked safely; He had provided for them water from the rock, and manna from Heaven, and quails from the wilderness; He had given them amidst the grandeurs of Mount Sinai laws, and rulers, and an altar, and a worship sim-

ple and glorious, and suitable to Himself; He had planted them as a choice vine in the promised land; He, in the days of their feebleness, had watched over them and guarded and defended them; He had brought them through the dangerous days of the Judges into the glorious ones of David and Solomon, of which the queen of Sheba said, "the half has not been fold;" and now, two centuries and a half from those glorious days comes the inglorious end! Willfully, carelessly, with open eyes in the face of what God had done for them, and in the face of His prophets, they had sinned. In their idolatry they had rebelled against God. And from the rebellion ruin came like venom from a serpent's tooth. Homes abandoned, vineyards torn, wheat-fields wasted, city walls broken down, and smoking, blackened piles of stones and ashes where once were markets. palaces and altars. Such is the end of wrong doing whether on the part of a nation or a man. "The wages of sin is death."

And the Greatest Sin? In a sense all sins are great and terrible. But in a sense also some are greater than others. We are told that Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, drove Israel from serving Jehovah and caused them "to sin a great sin." The people of Israel knew better than to worship dumb and hideous and shameful idols, and therefore it was for them a greater sin than for the idolaters themselves. They had been chosen by God, and by Him they had been blessed and guided in a thousand ways. In view of all His goodness to them, to turn from Him was to sin a great sin. It was like the wicked cry, "not Christ but Barabbas." There is no greater sin than to miss the mark of life. John Ruskin says: "I do not wonder at what men suffer; but I wonder at what they miss."

Quiz and Study. 1. Does the worship of God tend to strict and sober living? 2. What was the relation between Israel's idolatry and drunkenness? 3. Is our own nation suffering from vices which began centuries ago? 4. Are we indulging vices which may ruin us in years to come? Challenge Text: "Come, let us return unto the

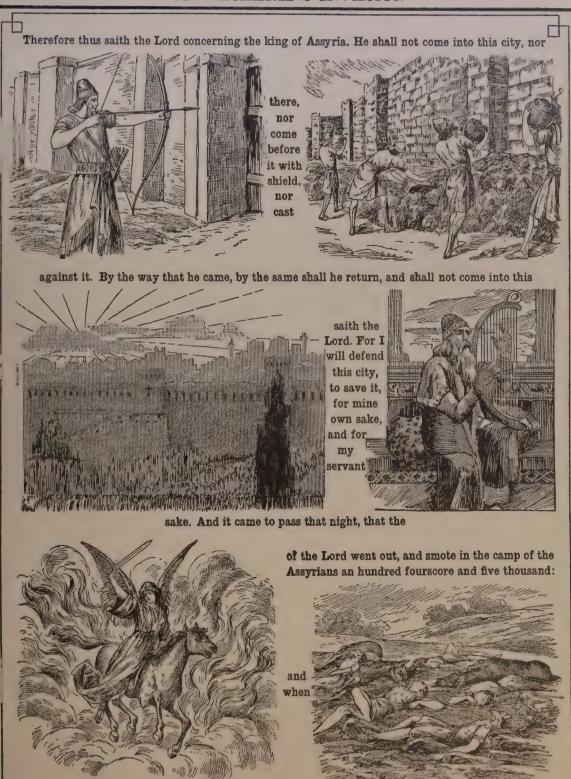
Challenge Text: "Come, let us return unto the ___; for He hath torn and He will ___ us; He hath ___ and He will ___ us up."—Hosea 6:(?).

Practical Thoughts: There is frequent reference in the books of Kings to Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin." The example set by men in high position is too easily followed by men lower down.

Hoshea was a better king than those who preceded him. Yet he suffered more than they. He was bound up in their history. Just so in everyday life the innocent suffer with and for the guilty. We are like stitches in a stocking; when one is broken the rest ravel. A noble man will be careful lest he cause others to suffer.

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION



II KINGS XIX: 32-35.

corpses.

they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II KINGS 19:20-37.

Prayer: Almighty God and our Father, though our foes be mighty, and though they boast great things, and though the way seems shut before us, yet help us to know that Thine arm is strong and that Thy ways are wonderful. As in a single night Thou didst turn back the proud enemy of Thy ancient people, so Thou canst bring to us glad mornings. In Jesus Thou hast taught us to call Thee Father, and in His name we pray for childlike trust. For Christ's sake, Amen.

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold; His cohorts all gleaming in purple and gold; And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea.

When the blue waves roll nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,

That host with their banners at sunset were seen; Like the leaves of the forest when summer hath

That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown."

—Byron.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 701 B. C., according to the Assyrian chronology. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Hezekiah king of Judea, Isaiah the prophet, Sennacherib king of Assyria, the people of Jerusalem, and the army of the Assyrians.

Scripture Setting: Parallel accounts, 2 Chron. 32. Isa. 36 and 37. Psalm 46 may be read as an ode to victory.

Life and Conduct Setting: Verses 20 to 28 are

a taunt song in answer to the Assyrian braggart, Rabshakeh, whom Sennacherib had sent to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. The other verses present the answer to the prayer of Hezekiah, and the sequel to the history of Sennacherib. On the whole we have the spectacle of one godly man, the prophet Isaiah, hoping against all human hope, defying those who mocked his people and his God, and saving his city. "Wisdom is better than weapons of war."

HOW ONE MAN SAVED A CITY.

Rabshakeh at the Walls of Jerusalem. Sennacherib was one of the proudest of ancient kings. He tells on his monuments how other kings came and brought him rich presents and kissed his feet. When Hezekiah had reigned fourteen years this boastful monarch attempted to conquer the whole country as far west as Egypt. Judea lay directly in his way and he swept down over it, taking city after city. While he was beseiging Lachish he sent to Hezekiah demanding a tribute of him. Hezekiah sent him at least a million of dollars, as we should say, and in order to get it he had to take away the gold and silver vessels of the temple and even the gold plates from the temple doors and posts.

This did not satisfy the proud and terrible king. Some time after he sent his captain, Rabshakeh, with an army to demand the surrender of the city. Rabshakeh was a braggart like his master. He strutted down to the city and there, instead of a courteous conference with Hezekiah's officers, he roared out his mockeries in the ears of all the people. Forty-six cities his master had taken. This, the capital, he would take with a single speech. He cried aloud to the people, mocking their king and their God, and promising them ease and luxury in his own country if they would surrender. "Make peace with me," he said, "and then eat ye every man of his own vine and every man of his own fig tree, and drink ye every one of the water of his cistern till I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of corn and grapes, a land of breadcorn and orchards."

One Nest Not Robbed. When the Assyrian kings conquered a city and looted it they spoke of it as lightly as robbing a bird's nest. Here is an inscription on one of their monuments: "As one that gathereth eggs I have gathered all the earth; there was none that moved the wing or that opened the mouth or chirped." But there was one reason why this easy, bird's-nest sort of conquest should not succeed in Jerusalem. There was a man in Jerusalem greater than either of the kings in the conflict, and as brave as any soldier and loyal to God, and a lover of God's city and people. On this man king Hezekiah leaned and found support. To him the people turned and were guided. From him came defiance of Sennacherib and his army, and the prediction of their destruction. That one high-souled man was more to Jerusalem than trumpets and shields and spears and banners and an army and the king himself. It was Isaiah who gave Hezekiah faith to pray, and it was he who held out and saved the city when others would have given up.

An Ugly Letter Answered by Prayer. When Rabshakeh returned to Sennacherib he found him besieging another city of the old Philistine region, namely, Libnah. Then he heard that an Egyptian army was coming from the south, and he hastily sent a letter to Hezekiah demanding his surrender. Hezekiah took the letter into the temple and "spread it before the Lord," and prayed.

He prayed that the city might be saved and that the whole world might know that the

Lord and He only was God.

Isaiah sent to the king the Lord's answer to his prayer, and a part of it is as though he were talking into the very face of Sennacherib. "The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn. The virgin daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel. Because of thy raging against Me, and for that thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way that thou camest."

"My Hook in Thy Nose." This striking figure is drawn from the cruel practices of the Assyrians, who were accustomed to lead their captives away like beasts, with hooks in their noses. The "hook" in this case was a deadly visitation. In one night "The angel of the Lord went forth and smote the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four-score and five thousand. And when they arose in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies."

When this happened the Assyrian army was on its way to Egypt and was turned back suddenly. There is an Egyptian account confirming the biblical one, of which Dr. George Adam Smith says: "The parallel with the Bible narrative is close. In both accounts it is a prayer of the king that prevails. In both the Deity sends His agent—in the grotesque Egyptian an army of mice; in the sublime Jewish, His angel. In both the effects are sudden, happening in a night."

The loss of so many soldiers in a single night was fearful. Besides what might happen in another day and night Sennacherib could not guess. He left the country as quickly as he could and on his proud monuments he simply says that he returned suddenly. He had nothing to boast of. "So Sennacherib departed and went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh" is the terse biblical conclusion. In this way the Lord answered Hezekiah's prayer and fulfilled Isaiah's prediction.

History cannot be explained altogether by "the heaviest battalions." Napoleon lost Waterloo "by the nod of a peasant's head." God was not on the side of the battalions there, nor at Moscow. Cromwell prayed and conquered. George Washington prayed and Yorktown surrendered. There were those who mocked Lincoln, calling him a boor and a railsplitter; but Lincoln went forward in prayer till he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation.

Better than Walls and Towers and Cat-

apults. "I will defend this city," saith the Lord. When the Lord defends His people He does not need the help of stone mason and the engineer and the soldier. Prayer is better than walls and forts and battlements. To please God is safer for us than an army with banners. Hezekiah prayed; Isaiah prophesied; and not an arrow from the bow of Sennacherib reached the walls of Jerusalem. "Not by an army nor by power, but by My Spirit," saith the Lord. It is right that makes might, and the Lord is right. When they flattered President Lincoln by telling him the Lord was on his side, he said, "I am not so much concerned to have the Lord on my side as I am to be on His side." Ah, that is what we should all seek; and when we are there we shall not need to carry guns and fight duels. In the stillness of the night the angel of the Lord will fight our battles, and we shall rest and be at peace.

The End of a Proud and Cruel King. Sennacherib called himself "The great king. the powerful king, the king of the Assyrians, of the nations of the four regions, the favorite of the great gods, the noble hero, the builder of monuments, the strong warrior," etc., etc. On his monuments he was painted as seated on a throne, in royal robes, with tiara and bracelets, receiving the spoils and captives of the city of Lachish and giving orders for the slaughter of the people. In the name of the Lord Isaiah stood up alone and defied him; the Lord smote his army; and in Nineveh, in the temple of his idol Nisroch, his own sons slew him while he worshiped. This was the end of the mighty monarch who fought against God and mocked the people of God.

Quiz and Study. 1. Did Rabshakeh think of Jehovah as different from other gods, or as one of them? 2. Had the gods of the Assyrians any moral character? 3. What was the secret of Isaiah's boldness? 4. How did he know that Jerusalem would not be besieged, and that something would happen to the Assyrian army? 5. What may be the worth of one brave and righteous man to a city or nation? 6. Which is more effective, a king on his throne, or a king on his knees? 7. Of all the great men in Jerusalem who was the greatest?

Practical Thoughts. 1. God really cares for His people, and when they obey Him, and pray to Ilim, He can and does answer them. 2. He has ways that we could never dream of. Perhaps even Isaiah had no idea as to how God would answer his prophecy when he said of Sennacherib, "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there." He will find the way for us if we only trust Him. 3. Isaiah's faith was the kind that can remove mountains, and Sennacherib's pride was the kind that goes before a fall.

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

In those days was Hezekiah



unto And the prophet Isaiah the of



and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned



and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee.



remember now how I have walked before thee in

and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle



word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith



thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II KINGS 20:1.17.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thou are compassionate always. May we trust Thee whether in health or sickness, and to Thy will make us resigned. In Christ Thou hast revealed Thy tenderest care for us, and in Him Thou hast given us our highest hope. In the light of His revelation sickness becomes benediction and death translation. Yet we, too, like Thy servant of old, ask for added years that we may glorify Thee with lengthened labor. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

"There is a power which man can wield When mortal aid is vain, God's eye, and arm, and love to reach, His listening ear to gain.

That power is prayer, which soars on high, Through Jesus to the throne; And moves the hand which moves the world. To bring salvation down."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 712-3 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Hezekiah king of Judah, Isaiah the prophet, Berodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon.

Scripture Setting: Parallel account, Isaiah 38 and 39. A royal prayer, Psa. 61. A prayer of distress, Psa. 143. Prayer of a stricken conscience, Psa. 51. Christ's intercessory prayer, John 17.

Life and Conduct Setting: Hezekiah's prayer is

a model of brevity. There are only thirty words.

It is the prayer of a model life. "I have walked

before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight."

It is a prayer in which the petition is unspoken, but the life and the weeping express it. It is much to be able to present to God a perfect heart and a life of well-doing. God knew and answered the longing of the king still to live, and still to do good. As the king prayed he "wept sore." Prayer is not eloquence but earnestness. It is not "much speaking" but deep feeling. God hears and answers our tears.

A PRAYER THAT DROVE AWAY DEATH.

Point of Contact. Just as in sickness and sorrow and death we are all one, so we are all one in the resort to prayer when driven to our last stand. When there is no human help we turn our face to the wall and lift our heart to God. Victor Hugo's abandoned criminals in a sinking boat all pray, and the last we see is a hand with index finger pointing upward through the waves. Prayer is a note of the race. It is a necessity. It is communion with God as Friend and Fa-There is nothing deeper in life than religion and there is nothing deeper in religion than prayer. It is the root and from it there is the promise of all the fruit of religion.

When you were in darkness you asked for light; when you were in trouble you asked for guidance; when you had a great inspiration to do good you asked for help; when you were under temptation you cried for deliverance; when you were in the deep waters you sought "the everlasting arms."

The Word of Doom and the King's Last Hope. In the fourteenth year of his reign Hezekiah became very sick. The Assyrians were threatening the city and the people were in great trouble. The prophet Isaiah, who was both minister and physician to the king, came to him and said, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." It is very hard to go to a man who is sick and tell him that he cannot get well, and when Isaiah did this he performed his saddest duty to his royal patient. We can see him turning at once with bowed head to go away.

The king turned his face to the wall, for it was a time to shut out the world. No one but God saw his tears while he prayed, saying, "I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart and have done that which is good in Thy sight." Thus in the face of doom the king had hope in God through prayer.

The Answered Prayer. Isaiah had not crossed the court of the palace when he was inspired to turn and go back and bring the king a glad answer to his prayer. And this was the answer: Fifteen years of lengthened life! The deliverance of the city from Assyria! And the Lord's defense of the city after it was delivered! We are not told that the king had prayed for so much, but it often happens that the Lord's answers are fuller than our petitions. Melancthon, who was a friend of Luther, said: "Trouble and perplexity drive me to prayer, and prayer drives away trouble and perplexity." So Hezekiah had been driven to prayer, and prayer had driven away not only death, but also the troubles of his throne.

Tears Also Answered. "I have heard thy prayer; I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee. On the third day thou shalt go up into the house of the Lord." Nothing touches a mother's heart like a child's tear. And God is a Father as tender as any mother. He, too, sees our tears. When the heart is broken tears are but another form of prayer. They plead for us as the cry of the little child Moses plead for the sympathy of the Egyptian princess. When Pharaoh's

daughter opened the ark of rushes, "behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him." The tears of that baby boy changed the world's history by melting the heart of a queenly woman, and gaining for the child a royal home. And like that baby boy, some of us have tears when we have no words. But to God our tears and heart-breaks are precious. He does not forget them. He answers them.

Tears are not only sad but noble also when their cause is great. Hezekiah wanted to live that "peace and truth might be in his days." A really noble man does not so much fear death as he longs to do good. When William Pitt the younger was dying, he sighed, saying, "My country! How I leave my country!"

The Returning Shadow and Healing Poultice. It was said above that Isaiah was both physician and teacher to the king. And now that he has brought the best of cheer to his pupil's mind he prescribes a medicine for his patient's body. The Divine providence and the household remedy were made to work together. Though we had miracles, we should still need doctors and medicines and wise and kindly nurses. Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil and he recovered."

The sign granted to Hezekiah, for he seemed to think the news too good to be easily received, was that the shadow should go back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. God could work this miracle simply by curving the rays of light just as a man can throw a baseball in curves. If we put a straight stick in the water it seems broken at the surface of the water; but it is the rays of light that are broken, and not the stick. We cannot say that one miracle is greater than another, but it is right for us to understand them all as far as we can and to know that God may do great things in simple ways. This miracle inspired the prophet and helped the king to believe and soon he was well. His prayer was answered and the people rejoiced.

The King's Imprudence. The story of Hezekiah's sickness and his recovery reached as far as Babylon, and to congratulate him the king of Babylon, Berodach-baladan, sent him a letter and a present. On the surface this was a beautiful thing to do, but the messengers were spies and Hezekiah was "taken in" by them. He was so flattered

that he showed them "all the house of his precious things, the silver and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasures." He kept back nothing. This was especially imprudent in those days when temple robbing was a business on the part of kings. And the vulgar display! How many kings of capital and favorites of fortune and newly rich people are given to that! The good king, through his vanity, was a blunderer in diplomacy and the rebuke of the far-sighted prophet was quick and keen.

"Whence came these men?" said the prophet. "From a far country, even from Babylon," said the king.

"What have they seen in thy house?"

"There is nothing in my treasures that I have not showed them."

Then the prophet sternly foretold the destruction of the city by the Babylonians, the plundering of its treasures, and even the captivity of the king's sons. And all was fulfilled in a little more than a hundred years.

Not Embittered but Made Better. The sickness, the answered prayer, the prophet's rebuke, made Hezekiah a better man. Some are embittered by sickness and misfortune. But Hezekiah became humble, and said that it was good that peace and truth should be in his days. And out of his gratitude to God he sang a hymn which Isaiah has treasured for us, in which he says,

"Behold, it was for my peace that I had great

bitterness;
But Thou hast loved my soul from the pit of nothingness;

For Thou hast cast all my sins behind my back,"

Quiz and Study. 1. What effect had faith and prayer in working the king's cure? 2. Is it wise to discard doctors and medicines? 3. Why was Isaiah so sure that the king would die and then presently so sure that he would live? 4. Did the king just simply want to live a few years longer or had he the nobler thought of the good of his kingdom? 5. Would it be pleasant to live with a date fixed for one's death?

Challenge Text. "I will take the cup of —, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my — unto the Lord, now in the presence of all the people."—Psalm 116. (1)

Practical Thoughts. The prayer Hezekiah offered in his sickness was not his only prayer. He prayed when Sennacherib threatened the city and nation. He was a man of prayer, and as we look back on his history the greatest thing we can see in him, and the best thing we can say of him is just this, that prayer was the undercurrent of his life; it made him good, and helped him to become better. Also his habit of prayer ranks him with great

Also his habit of prayer ranks him with great men. President Lincoln said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day.

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

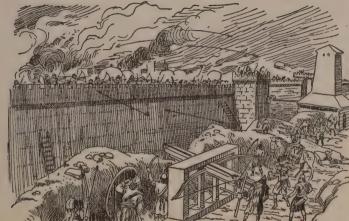
And it came to pass, in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar



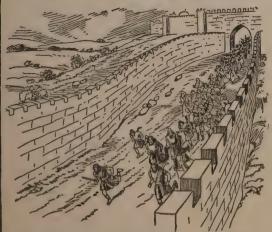
of Babylon
came, he, and
all his host,
against
Jerusalem,
and pitched
against it;
and they



against
it round
about.
And the
city was



unto the eleventh
year of king Zedekiah.
And on the ninth day
of the fourth month
the famine prevailed
in the city, and there
was no bread for the
people of the land.
And the city was
broken up, and all
the men of war



Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

And the army of the Chaldees

by night, by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the



after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

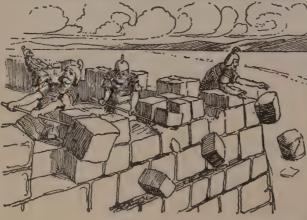
And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaraden, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he



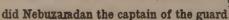
the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the



of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard,



of Jerusalem round about. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude,



But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.

And the

of brass that
were in the
house of the
Lord, and
the bases,
and the
brasen sea
that was in
the house of
the Lord, did
the Chaldees



and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II KINGS 25:1.12

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Help us so to live as a nation that there may come upon us no great calamity. May we have the godliness that leads to brotherliness, and the gentleness that ripens into greatness. In the law of love may we find discipleship toward Thy Son Jesus, and may we through centuries enjoy the salvation that springs from service. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen

O God, the heathen are come up into Thine inheritance;

Thy holy temple they have defiled;

They have laid Jerusalem in heaps;
The dead bodies of Thy servants they have given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, The flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood they have shed like water round about Jerusalem:

And there was none to bury them.

-Psalm 79.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 586 B. C. Places, Jerusalem, the plains of Jericho, and Babylon. Persons, Zedekiah the king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan captain of the guard of Nebuchadnezzar, a "remnant" enslaved, and "the poor of the land."

Scripture Setting: "Woe to the bloody city,"

Ezekiel 24. Destruction of Jerusalem foretold, Jeremiah 24. Parallel accounts of the destruction, 2 Chronicles 36:14-21, and Jeremiah 39. Lamenta-

tion over the city in ruins. Lam. 2:1-15.

Life and Conduct Setting: All the prophets trace the destruction of Judah to the sins of Judah. Car-

lyle found the same lesson in the French Revolution and its terrors. He says, "Through all time, if we read aright, sin was, and is, and will be the parent of misery."

God's justice must have its way when His mercy is mocked. The people would not hear their prophets calling them to repentance and to God. They stumbled willfully, blindly on, till they fell

over the precipice.

The worship of God is a fountain of life. But the people of Judah preferred idolatry. "They hewed themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water."

BROKEN COVENANTS.

Point of Contact. The national sins of the kingdom of Judah were followed by a great and terrible calamity, the utter destruction of the kingdom and its central city. As long as we have aged men among us who wear the grand army button we are not out from under the shadows of our own civil war. We nursed in our bosom a great evil. the sin of slavery, a crime against humanity. We paid the penalty in five awful years, the loss of half a million of brave men north and south, the expenditure of thousands of millions of dollars and a martyred president.

The Broken Covenants Were Three. 1. There was above all others the perpetual covenant between Jehovah and His people that they should worship and serve Him and that they should not turn aside to idols. Again and again the kings and people had reaffirmed this covenant and again and again they had violated it. They had turned their back on the altars of their fathers and in their gross idolatry had said "to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth."

2. There was the covenant with the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had made Zedekiah king and Zedekiah had taken an oath of loyalty to the Babylonian monarch. Within eight years of this oath he sought an alliance with Pharaoh-Hophra, king of Egypt, and refused to pay tribute to Babylon. He "rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar by sending ambassadors into Egypt that they might give him horses and much people."

There was the covenant of liberty to their own enslaved brothers. During the dark days of the seige of Jerusalem the king, Zedekiah, under the influence of Jeremiah, proclaimed the freedom of all Hebrew slaves. The "princes" agreed and their man-servants and maid-servants were allowed to go free, according to the ancient law that none "should serve himself of a Jew, his brother." But presently Pharaoh-Hophra's advance drew away the beseiging army. Thinking they were now safe, the fickle people at once violated this covenant also, and reclaimed their slaves. The rebuke of Jeremiah was fearful. In bitter sarcasm he cried, "Ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother and every man to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim a liberty to you, saith the Lord, a liberty to the sword, to the pestilence and to the famine. And I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth."

The Boiling Pot. While Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem, Ezekiel was living and prophesying among the captives already in Babylon, whither he had been carried in 597 B. C. Under the emblem of a rusted, seething pot of meat and bones he described the woes of the besieged and falling city. The figure is terrible, but not more so than the siege. "No horror was spared. The sepulchres were rifled for treasures; maidens and old men were slain. Princes were hanged up by the hand, and the faces of elders were dishonored; priest and prophet were slain in the sanctuary of the Lord till blood flowed like red wine over the desecrated floor." Palaces and temples were plundered and burned. Human flesh and offal served for fcod

during the siege, and the emaciated survivors were led away into slavery.

"At The Head of Two Ways." In fulfillment of this prophecy Nebuchadnezzar is pictured by Ezekiel (21:21) as already on his way westward. He stands casting lots where the roads fork, one leading to Rabbah, the other to Jerusalem. Is it chance that decides which way he shall take? "He shakes the arrows; he consults the teraphim; he looks in the liver." By such hap-hazard will he decide one of the great events of history? We toss coppers over trifles. But this was more than a trifle. It was the Lord's will that Jerusalem should be rebuked. The Lord directed what Nebuchadnezzar dreamed was chance. Three arrows are shaken hard in a quiver. He draws out one and holds it high in his right hand. It is "the divination for Jerusalem," and the die is cast. We imagine the great king crying, "Forwardmarch!" and the caravan route to Jerusalem holds a terrible, conquering army.

Digging Out Through a Wall. By another emblem Ezekiel foretold the disgraceful flight of king Zedekiah. In the twelfth chapter of his prophecy he records this command from the Lord to himself: "Dig thou through the wall in their sight and carry out thereby." So the prophet packed his stuff as "stuff for captivity" and in the evening he digged through the wall with his hand and came out bearing his stuff on his shoulder. His face was covered so that he could not see the ground, signifying disguise, blindness and stumbling. No emblem could better show the shame and sorrow and blundering of king Zedekiah. Had he yielded he might have been saved, for so was the message of Jeremiah to him. But he hesitated and the awful seige went on. At last when they "made a breach in the wall" he sought to escape "by the gate betwixt the two walls; and he went out by the way of the plain." Disgraced, disguised and a fugitive, he was overtaken by the Babylonian soldiers and brought to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. There they slew his sons before him and then put his eyes out, and led him captive to Babylon. In his sad experience two prophecies, seemingly contradictory, were fulfilled. Jeremiah had said, "Thou shalt see the eyes of the king of Babylon." Ezekiel had said, "I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldaeans; yet shall he not

see it, though he shall die there." Ne-

buchadnezzar led away captive the fairest of the people, leaving the poorer and less capable to care for the land under officials

appointed by himself.

The Burning of the House of the Lord. This was the climax of destruction. The seige ended in conflagration. The glorious temple that Solomon had built, the king's palaces and every great man's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem "burnt he with fire." The altar and the hearthstones of the people, their city walls and their market places, and even their streets—all were gone. They beat their breasts as they looked on their blackened homes and they turned away with torn hair and garments from smoking ruins as the Babylonian soldiers herded them together for the long march into a strange land. And the temple even! Hundreds of thousands of Jews had gazed with patriotic pride on that majestic building, with its lavish decorations of marble and gold, its sacred courts, its holy place and its holy of holies; there they had presented their sacrifices and had taught their children to pray, and there they had learned to trust Jehovah's power and protection. As they gazed back from distant hills on their weary march they saw nothing of all that recent glory but broken walls and crumbling marbles and smoking timbers. A wail went up from the hearts of the despairing people.

"They have laid Jerusalem in heaps;
The dead bodies of Thy servants they have given
To be meat to the fowls of heaven."

Quiz and Study. 1. Would loyalty to his oath on the part of king Zedekiah have averted this warfare and bloodshed and devastation? 2. When and how often had Nebuchadnezzar previously come against Jerusalem? 2 Kings, 23:36-24:1. Also 24:8-16. 3. Of what other awful siege in the

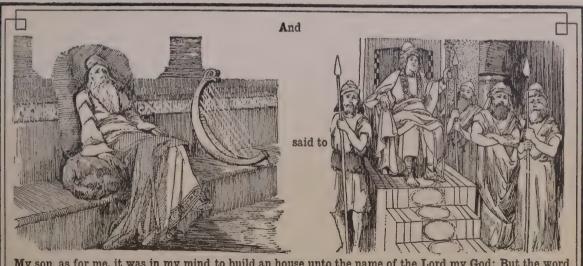
history of Jerusalem does this one remind us?

Challenge Text: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to — upon them that — Him, and His righteousness unto children's ---; to such as keep His ——, and to those that remember His —— to do them." Psalm 103. (?)

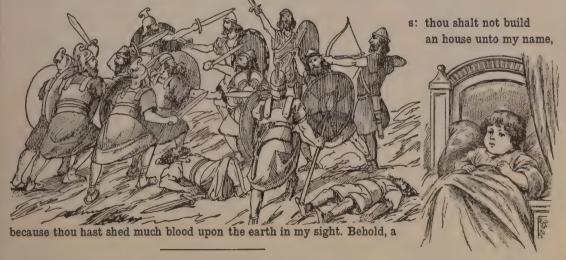
Practical Thoughts. 1. Righteousness is a nation's best protection and sin is its greatest danger. 2. There is such a thing as honor under the hardest conditions. Zedekiah should have been true to his oath to Nebuchadnezzar till some better way could have been found than a secret alliance with Egypt. 3. God's teachers and prophets should be heard and heeded. Zedekiah recklessly disregarded the warnings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

"God sends His teachers with every age, To every clime and every race of men, With revelations fitted to their growth And shape of mind.''—Lowell. DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON



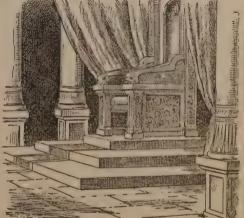
My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God: But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly and hast made great



shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.



for my
name; and
he shall
be my
son, and
I will be
his father;
and I will
establish
the



of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

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I CHRON. XXII: 7-10.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS I CHRON. 28:1-10, 20, 21.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou are the rightful Ruler of our lives. By creation and again by redemption

Thou dost doubly own us.

We hail Thy power, as we have been won by Thy grace. Do with us, and by us, as it may seem best to Thee. May all our plans and ambitions be ever subordinate to Thy wise rule and will. Work in and by us to advance Thy kingdom and glorify Thyself. For Christic acknowledges to the control of th Thyself. For Christ's sake. Amen.

An easy thing, O Power Divine, To thank Thee for these gifts of Thine! For summer's sunshine, winter's snow, For hearts that kindle, thoughts that glow; But when shall I attain to this-To thank Thee for the things I miss? -Thomas W. Higginson.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1015. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, David and Solomon.

Scripture Setting: Conditions of Best Service. Basis of service, Deut. 6:4-9. Fruitful service, Psa. 1. Strong service, Isa. 40:22-31. Diligent service, 2 Pet. 3:9-14. Happy service, Isa. 26:3-12. Full service, Rom. 12. Adaptive service, 1 Cor. 9:19-27. Secret of service, John 15:4-16.

Life and Conduct Setting: In this great disappointment of David, we are taught some important principles in Christian work. 1. The principle of co-operation. Note the nine influential classes he interests in the work, verse 1. 2. Mutual and frank counsel regarding the work, verse 2. 3. Submission to the will of God, even when he was prevented from his chosen work, verse 3. 4. Gratitude for past mercies, and public acknowledgment of them, verse 4. 5. Seeing God's hand in all things, verses 5-7. 6. A full and hearty obedience, and influencing all the people to the same, verse 8. 7. A worthy character and life, by which God is declared to others verses 8. 10. is declared to others, verses 9, 10.

A GOOD FATHER'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

The Best Work. Not everything that is right is best. David had been a man of war, and this was right, for God had ordered it. Even David himself would not claim that war and conquest were the best things. But David had it in his heart now to do one of these best things, namely, to build a house for God, where He might be worshiped and where He could specially reveal Himself to the people. scarcely think of any nobler task than that, for it means the distributing of many blessings to the world. The house of God stands for the book of God, and the day of God, and the Spirit of God, and the people of God. These five things or forces are the means by which God builds up His kingdom in the world; and if the house of God is lacking all the others would be prevented from doing their best work. David felt this, so he was anxious to build a fitting temple for the God of Heaven. called the "man after God's own heart," and it must be that he was sincere in this desire. He began to gather material for a magnificent temple. He even selected the place for it and engaged skilled workmen and had the promise of cedar and other wood from Hiram king of Tyre.

Aim for the Best. Some men are afraid of being too religious. What we need today is men who believe down deep in their souls what they profess. The world is tired and sick of sham. Let your whole heart be given up to God's service. Aim high.

God wants us all to be His ambassadors. It is a position higher than that of any monarch on earth to be a herald of the cross; but you must be filled with the Holy Spirit. A great many peo-ple are afraid to be filled with the Spirit of God -afraid of being called fanatics. You are not good for anything until the world considers you a fanatic. Fox said that every Quaker ought to shake the country ten miles around-D. L. Moody.

The Best Spirit. David had not gone far until God sent His prophet Nathan to talk with him about this house he wished to build. Did God tell David how to build the temple, as he had told Moses how to build the tabernacle? No, it was something very different, and it was a very great disappointment to David. God told him that he should not go ahead to build the temple, for he had been a man of war and it was not fitting that such a man should build a house that would stand for peace and prayer. God also told him that his son should build it. Now what does David do? Does he make other plans to use all these spoils of war and the other materials? No; he submits to God's will in the matter and we are not told that he was displeased in any way. That kind of a disappointment is a great test of character and David shows the very best spirit by his submission. He is the "man after God's own heart" and also after God's own will. Another way in which David showed a good spirit was by turning all over to Solomon and even gathering more material for him. This was the very best of advice, for it set an example of the best spirit.

How to Win When You Lose. "Do you remember the time I lost the race I'd been so sure of?" said Dick to Bob.

"I felt just as you do-disgusted-ready to throw the whole thing over. It was Professor Dana who saved me. He came up and shook hands and congratulated me. I can remember his words now. 'Field,' he said, 'you put up a good race, and next time you'll win; but you've won a bigger victory today, in proving yourself a good loser. I'm proud of you.' I wasn't, you know; I was black as night inside, but that made me think. Sometimes I've thought I didn't get anything in college so valuable as that sentence. It fits in everywhere.'

This time Bob nodded and smiled approval .-

Forward.

The Best Worker. That picture of war tells us something of David's life, and we would hardly think that he was the best person to build a temple of worship. But one of David's sons shall do this work, for the kingdom shall have a time of peace and quietness. His very name, Solomon. means "peaceful," and by nature he will be fitted for the great undertaking. David told Solomon all that he had planned and done, and urged him to go forward in the work. He also asked all the people to aid him by gifts, which they did. Solomon enters heartily into the plans of his father David. Together they work in fullest sympathy. Really it is almost as much David's temple as Solomon's, for he had done so much in advance. God purposed that Solomon should personally superintend the work, but he also gave David the credit for the thought of his heart and for all the preparatory work for it.

God believes in the motto, "To everyone his work," and by His providence He seeks to show each one what he should do and what he could do best. Everyone is best fitted for some certain work and he should not be satisfied until he finds what the work is and also the best way to do it. Here are some good rules for making the best worker.

"If I Were a Boy Again." In some of the papers of the late Dr. Harper, of the University of Chicago, was found a memorandum which read like this: "If I were a boy again, I would read every book that I could reach. I would strive to find out from good books how good men lived. If I were a boy again, I would cultivate new patience with the faults of others, and study my own with greater care. I would strive for humility. If I were a boy again, I would more and more cultivate the company of those older, whose graces of person and mind would help me on in my own work. I would always seek good company. If I were a boy again, I would study the Bible even more than I did. I would make it a mental companion. The Bible is a necessity for every boy. If I were a boy again, I would study the life and character of our Saviour persistently, that I might become more and more like unto Him."

The Best Helper. This seems to be a story of best things—the best work, the best spirit, the best worker, and now the best

Helper. Are you thinking that that means David in Solomon's case? We have seen that David was a splendid helper to Solomon, both in the matter of advice and in the real contributions to the building Solomon was to erect. But Solomon's best Helper was not David, but rather David's God. Hear what God promised to and for Solomon: "I will give him rest from all his enemies." "I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days"; "he shall build an house for my name"; "he shall be my son and I will be his Father"; "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Here are five great promises which cover every part of his life and reign and made by One who is able to fulfill them. The two last pictures show how God began fulfilling the promises. No one ever had a better start in life or a brighter outlook. There is one promise of Christ's which is worth more than all those five great promises: and it is made not merely to kings, but to all who are willing to receive it and believe it. It refers not only to this life and work here, but points to the future and assures the constant presence and aid of Jesus Christ, the great Helper. It is this: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Still Better to Follow Christ. There is a story told of a man who was once walking through a dangerous swamp in the night time and was startled to find that his little boy had followed him. Turning about, he said, "My son, don't you know that a misstep anywhere here might cost you your life?" To which the little fellow replied, "Father, I am stepping right in your foot-prints, then I know I will be all right."

Quiz and Study. 1. What bad son did David have, and what did he do? 2. What good son, and what did he do? 3. What are the five greatest Bible characters up to David's time? 4. Name some of the ten classes David influenced to build the temple. 5. What great desire of Moses was not granted, and why?

Challenge Text. "Whatsoever thy findeth to do, do it with thy ____." Eccl.

9: (%

Practical Thoughts. 1. Christian work requires above all else a right heart and spirit. 2. Nature, disposition, circumstances, surroundings, gifts, all help to determine our life work. 3. In greatest disappointments we may yet find greatest appointments. 4. The fullest co-operation necessitates much personal concession, and even sacrifice. 5. All believers are as a temple builded together in Christ, and for His glory. 6. For God's house, and for every other work, the best we have should be fully given. 7. Duty of fathers to counsel their children, and the duty of children to obey. 8. Everyone should find his place and his work in temple-building for God.

DR. J. M. COON.

ASA'S GOOD REIGN

And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God: For he took away



of the strange gods, and the high olaces and



and



the groves: And commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and



the commandment.

Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah

and the kingdom was quiet before him. And he built fenced



in
Judah.
for the
land had
rest, and
he had
no



in those years; because the Lord had given him rest.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 14:1-15.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We thank Thee for Thy ancient law and its penalties, for Thy love and its inspirations. Thy chastisements have been the chastisements of a Father's hand, and Thy severity is but the shadow cast by Thy kindness. Help us through the lessons of history, and more than all through the teachings of Jesus, to know Thee, whom to know is life eternal. In the name of Christ, Amen.

"Buried was the bloody hatchet;
Buried was the dreadful war-club;
Buried were all warlike weapons,
And the war-cry was forgotten.
Then was peace among the nations."
—Longfellow.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 955 to 914 B. C. According to some late authorities, 917 to 878 B. C. Places, Jerusalem and Mareshah. Persons, Asa king of Judah, Zerah the Ethiopian, an army of three hundred thousand out of Judah and two hundred and eighty thousand out of Benjamin.

Scripture Setting: Concluding record, 2 Chron. 15 and 16. Parallel record, 1 Kings 15:9-24. Poetic statements of the Hebrew faith in God's blessings on the righteous and His chastisements on the wicked, Psa. 1 and 34.

Life and Conduct Setting: Prosperity in peace and success in war were the rewards of king Asa while he lived in faith toward God.

The prophet Azariah (15:2-7) seized the moment of the king's victory to enforce upon him the conditions of continued prosperity. "The Lord is with you while you be with Him."

Both king and prophet saw clearly that loyalty to Jehovah meant war on idolatry, and quite heroically they overthrew the idols, and engaged in a great national season of sacrifice to God.

Good as he was king Asa lacked consistency in faith, and hence in conduct. He thought it safer to hire Benhadad against Baasha than to trust God. Thus blundering religiously he blundered politically.

GODLINESS AND GROWTH.

Ten Years of Peace. In those days of all but ceaseless warfare a respite of ten years was deemed worthy of note by the Hebrew historian. Ancient history is for the most part a record of battles and bloodshed and devastation. Wars were the rule; peace was the exception. Now peace is the rule and war is the exception. One of the most beneficent effects of Christianity is that it has militated against militarism. It has made wars fewer and their effects less terrible. Wars of extermination have entirely passed away among all civilized peoples and wars of conquest are out of keeping with the comity of nations. We have traveled a long way from the days when a short period of peace was a surprise. Under the reign of the Prince of Peace we are hastening to the time when "wars shall be no more." In our own land there has been but one war in a hundred and thirty years, and on the soil of England there has not been a battle for more than two hundred years.

Good Use of the Period of Peace. The vigorous and prudent king made use of these years in reforming the state religion and in preparing for war. The idol worship of Asa's people had become hereditary, for it began in the reign of Solomon. They were worshiping the gods that their fathers worshiped and that made it harder for the king to reform their religion. Besides, people do not readily give up their gods and sacrifices and priests and altars. Worship is too nearly related to life to be easily changed, and that is the reason that so many reformers are disliked and even persecuted. Asa's

reformation must have been very unpopular with many of his people. But the good king began in a most heroic way. His own mother, the "queen-mother," was an idolater and had set up one of her gods in a grove. It was an Ashera and was something like a great post or trunk of a tree. Asa cut it down and stamped on it and took it down to the brook Kidron and burnt it to ashes and then "removed her from being queen." This was a brave way to rebuke the false religion of all the people. He proceeded to take away the images of the false gods and cut down their groves and destroy their altars. But he never fully succeeded, for it is said in chapter 15, verse 17, "the high places were not taken away out of Israel."

In addition to his religious reformation Asa used the period of peace in preparing for war. His people were warlike tribesmen, and if the religious movement made him unpopular this one would make him popular, and it was well for him that he carried the two side by side. The northern kingdom under Baasha was a continual menace, and Asa fortified the border cities. The numbers he enlisted in his army surprise us; they show the military enthusiasm of the people. There were 300,000 out of Judah and 280,000 out of Benjamin! That was great indeed for a land so small.

A Great Victory. Zerah the Ethiopian—perhaps Osorkon I, the second king of the twenty-second Egyptian dynasty—victorious in the Nile valley, began to overrun the region at the foot of the Judaean highlands. He had an army of "a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots." The presence of such an army so near to his capital

was a challenge that Asa could not ignore. Though the enemy were two to one, yet there was faith in Jehovah, and there was hope of victory. Not always is the battle to the strong or the race to the swift. At Agincourt sixty thousand French were defeated by twenty thousand Englishmen. At Marathon the Persians brought ten to one against the Greeks. As a cried unto the Lord and said, "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude." The victory was decisive. It strengthened the good king mightily with his people, and under the instruction of the prophet Azariah he continued his war on the high places and the abominable idols.

"To Him That Hath Shall Be Given." Success succeeds and prosperity prospers. The kingdom grew. When they saw that the Lord his God was with Asa they came to him out of Benjamin and Ephraim and Manasseh, and even strangers came. His policies in peace, his victories in war and his confidence in God made his land a home for refugees. They flocked "like doves to his windows." His policy of godliness made the growth and prosperity of his kingdom such that the people celebrated his fifteenth year by a great season of worship in which they sacrificed 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep. "And they made a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.'

A Faith that Failed. We wonder that one who had been so helped of God could ever turn to lean on his own poor plans. Late in his life, in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, when Baasha, the king of Israel, came against him, Asa made an alliance with Benhadad, the king of Syria. He even robbed the house of God of its treasures of silver and gold, and gave them to the Syrian king for a bribe. He little thought, and little cared about the future of such a policy. Foreign help became at last the ruin of Judah. But Asa, like many another sinner, sold the future safety of his kingdom for a present mess of pottage. Benhadad came, and by attacking certain cities of Israel drew Baasha away from Judah.

The die was cast. The state was saved for a time, but a bait had been thrown to the foreign king, and God had been dishonored. The prophet Hanani came with a rebuke that was quick and sharp. hast done foolishly. From henceforth thou shalt have wars." Too much power and too many good things had made the king stubborn as well as foolish. He fell into a rage and put the prophet into prison.

And what an opportunity was lost by the fickle king! Would not God have delivered Baasha and Benhadad also into his hand if he had been faithful? Ah, that lesson is hard to learn: the lesson of trust so finely spoken by the prophet; "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."

"Spices and Sweet Odors." During the last two years of his reign Asa was a sufferer. He had a disease in his feet and it was "exceeding great." We do not know what the nature of this disease was, but more interesting than that is the historian's censure. "He sought not unto the Lord but unto the physicians." We should not smile at the naive expression. We should remember that the physicians of that day were. aside from the Jewish prophets themselves, priestly magicians of idolatrous altars, similar to the medicine men among Indian and African tribes today. Their magic failed to cure the king, but it angered the prophets of his own people. It brought a shadow over his last days. In his death, however, the people remembered his goodness and forgot his weakness, and they buried him in state "in a new sepulcher in the city of David," amidst spices and sweet odors and "a very great burning."

Quiz and Study. What is meant by "fenced cities," and what great change is indicated by the fact that we have no such cities? 2. building a sign of prosperity, and how does prosperity conduce to building, and what is the relation of peace to both? 3. Today we have peace commissions, and arbitration tribunals, and international law. But what could Asa do when a

great army came?
Challenge Text. "The angel of the Lord round about them that - Him, and delivereth them. O taste, and see that the Lord is ——. Blessed is the man that —— in Him." Psalm

Practical Thoughts. Practical atheism is to trust something, or some one else, more than God. This is what Asa did when he turned to Benhadad for help against Baasha, and gave him silver and gold out of the treasures of the Lord's house.

Practical faith is to trust God and go forward even when the way is fenced up by mountains of difficulty. Face to face with an army greater than his own Asa prayed, and won the victory.

God's relation to us is like that of a friend. He

can be friendly only while we are friendly. "If ye seek Him, He will be found of you; if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you."

King Asa's early years were his best, and his last years his worst. That is the saddest thing about him. Our lives should grow better with age, our faith stronger, our conduct more consistent, our friendships truer, and our prayers more consistent, our friendships truer, and our prayers more earnest. The Apostle Paul said at last, "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith." Christ on the cross cried out grandly, "It is finished." That was His note of a victorious life.

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S GOOD REIGN

And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; * * And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no



against
Jehoshaphat.
Also some
of the
Philistines
brought
Jehoshaphat
presents,
and tribute
silver;
and the



brought him



and seven thousand and seven hundred he

seven thousand and seven hundred rams,



And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah



and
cities
of store
And
he did
much



in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 17:1-13.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We thank Thee for those who have battled against idolatry and im-morality and cruelty, and who have gained the world's greatest victories on its spiritual battle-fields. We praise Thee for the teachers of men who lean more on truth and persuasion and love than on the shield and spear and sword. For the ancient synagogue and academy we praise Thee with fullness of heart, and yet more abundantly for our Christian churches and schools. Help us to teach much, and to fear not at all, and hasten the day when swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. In Christ's name and Spirit, Amen.

"Lord, Thy word abideth, And our footsteps guideth; Who its truth believeth Light and joy receiveth. O that we discerning Its most holy learning, Lord, may love and fear Thee, Evermore be near Thee."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, Jehoshaphat's reign, 914 to 889 B. C. The teaching mission, about 912 (Some recent authorities give a much later date for the reign of Jehoshaphat, namely 876 to 851 B. C.) Places, Land of Judah and cities of Ephraim. Persons, Jehoshaphat and his teaching

princes and Levites, vv 7 and 8.

Scripture Setting: Leading thought, the teaching of "the book of the law," and its power to remake a nation. Brief parallel account, 1 Kings 22:41-50. Ancient command to teach the law of the Lord, Deut. 6:1-12. Praise of the precepts of

the Lord, Psalm 119:1-16.

Life and Conduct Setting: Jehoshaphat pursued the double policy of protection and education. He fortified the border cities and placed soldiers in them. He discovered that it was not enough to destroy idols, he must destroy superstition and the love of idols in the hearts of the people. So he sent out teachers of "the book of the law" through all the cities of Judah. He became a great and honored king, and his own people, and even the Philistines and the Arabians brought him presents. In later years his alliance with Ahab brought him under the censure of Hanani the prophet.

JUDAH'S KING AS PRECEPTOR.

The Real Reformer the Teacher. When Jehoshaphat came to the throne he found two conditions that needed his care. The border cities on the north that his father Asa had taken were weak and defenseless. He fortified them and put soldiers in them,

thus protecting his kingdom.

Religiously there was a more serious condition. He saw that although the idols had been destroyed again and again, they were still there. He perceived that it was one thing to destroy an idol and quite another to change the heart of the man who worshiped it. As long as the people loved the idols and were ignorant of the law of the Lord, they would build again the old "high places" and bring back the images.

To us the king's greatness appears more in his effort to educate the people and so lift them above their gross idolatries, than in his enlistment of an army, the fortification of his cities and the collection of tribute from his own and weaker peoples. The historian presents this effort to enlighten the people of Judah as an incident. We hail it as the beginning of an age-long, beneficent policy. To educate is to remake. It is to remake the man himself in mind and heart and will and the only possible permanent reformation is in such remaking of men, one by one, till the whole state is remade. There is a Greek myth which tells how Sisyphus in Hades was condemned as a punishment

to roll a huge stone to the top of a hill. It immediately rolled down and he had to roll it up again, and so keep on forever. This was the way with idolatry as long as the people did not know better. So king Jehoshaphat very early in his reign sent out his princes with priests and Levites "to teach in the cities of Judah."

The Power of the Word of God. "And they had the book of the law of the Lord with them." That is what they taught. It is a beautiful thing to see those princes and priests going about from city to city having in their hands rolls of the law of the Lord and gathering the people together and un-rolling their "books of the law" and reading and explaining them. It was the beginning of synagogues and schools and our missionaries do very much the same way in India and China and Africa today.

And wherever the Bible is taught it makes people different. They think differently and love higher things and seek to do

as God wills.

Prof. Green in his history of Puritan England tells us what a wonderful influence the Bible had when it was first translated and put in the churches. He says, "The Bible was as yet the one book which was familiar to every Englishman; and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm. Its effect, however dispassionately we may examine it, was simply amazing. The whole nation became a church."

It was in this way that the good king became

a preceptor to his people. He felt what our national forefathers felt when they said, "We must educate or we must perish."

Education and Regeneration. Looked at closely the king was seeking more than the education, he was seeking the regeneration of his people. He wanted them not only to be better, but to be renewed in their relation to God. A striking parallel is found in the plans of our Saviour. After His resurrection, in His great commission, He said to His disciples, "Go teach all nations."

In Exeter Hall, London, an engine driver was called out before a crowded house of the Christian Railway Men's Association. He had not prepared a speech, but this is what he said: "Mr. Chairman. there are some people who say, legislate, legislate, legislate. So say we workingmen. Parliament can do a great deal for us, and the sooner it does it the better. There are others who say, educate, educate, educate. So say we workingmen, and we are thankful for what has been done of late for the working classes. But while we are ready to say legislate, legislate, legislate, and educate, educate, regenerate, we say above everything else, regenerate, regenerate. Bring into the working class the might of the Spirit of God."

Policy of Conservation. The barest mention was made above to the fact that Jehoshaphat fortified the cities that his father had taken. He came to a kingdom made great and secure by the statesmanship of another. His wisdom is shown in that he conserved what came to his hand, and furthered the policy that had been successful. Those "fenced cities," that his father had thrown like a wall with towers along the borderland of the northern kingdom were a source of security and pride to him, and he honored his father by re-enforcing them and setting garrisons in them. He is a spendthrift who squanders his heritage. and he is unfaithful to his trust who fails to reap where his fathers have sown. He only honors the past who gathers out of it a better future.

A Mistake that Marred a Life. A single drop of certain dyes will stain a whole bucket of clear water. So there are lives marred by one mistake. In his later years Jehoshaphat visited the idolatrous king Ahab of the northern kingdom, and was feasted by him. "Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that were with him." That was the wily king's way of drawing Jehoshaphat into his quarrel against Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat, like many another well treated foolish fellow, fell into the trap, and in spite of the warnings of the prophet Micaiah he went into the battle with Ahab. A ridiculous picture is drawn of his conduct in the battle. He had an army, according to the previous chapter, of more than a million men, and he went into the battle in his royal robes, while Ahab shrewdly went in dressed as a private soldier. The Syrians directed their attack against the first man they could find that looked like a king, and that man was Jehoshaphat. and he, the commander of a million men, cried out, shouting to the Syrian charioteers that he was not the king of Israel. Begging thus he got out with his life, and "returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem."

So there on the one hand is his great and loyal and wise life, and there beside it, marring it, is the fact that he went like a "silly bird" into Ahab's trap, and on the battle field he cringed and cried trap, and on the battle field he cringed and cried instead of fighting. At a later time he made a similar mistake in a commercial alliance with Ahaziah the king of Israel. But for the most part the people remembered his piety and loyalty to God, his teaching of the law, and the prosperity

of his reign.

Loyalty and Prosperity. The books of Chronicles are written from the viewpoint of a definite theological conviction. The writer believed that Jehovah invariably blessed those who feared and served Him, and that He as invariably punished those who turned from Him to serve idols. Loyalty to God was therefore a synonym for patriotism,

and its reward was national glory and gain.

In the long run this holds both of men and nations. It is only in the running of a short race that the wicked even seem to win. Somehow, somewhere, the way of the transgressor is hard; and somehow, ultimately the way of the just is as and somenow, definitely the way of the just is as a shining light. The fruits of righteous sowing shall somewhere be garnered, and they that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind. "The world was certainly not framed for the lasting convenience of hypocrites, libertines and oppressors."

"Patience may be disappointed of her hope and Wisdom of her aim, but I have never yet seen folly fruitless of mischief, nor vice conclude but in calamity."

Walking in the commandments of the Lord king Jehoshaphat found the kingdom "established in his hand;" and presents pouring into his lap, "riches and honor in abundance;" and he enjoyed peace, for "the fear of the Lord fell on the na-tions round about him;" and "his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord."

Quiz and Study, 1. What was Jehoshaphat's first wise act on coming to the throne? 2. He had a great army, but what was a far better security to him? 3. What was his attitude toward idolatry? 4. What new and beneficent movement did he set on foot among the people looking to

their permanent help?

Practical Thoughts. We cannot live as we should without our teachers and preachers of the Word of God. Alexander said, "I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well." True religion inspires education. It was Jehoshaphat's love of God that prompted him to send out teachers to the people, and it is the Spirit set that they have built up our own great schools. of Christ that has built up our own great schools and colleges and universities. The church of God is the mother of education.

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

JEHOSHAPHAT HELPED OF GOD

And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the



of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said. Hear me. O Judah. and ye inhabitants of



Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his



so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the



and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to



and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against children, of

Moab. and mount Seir, which were

come against Judah; and they were



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON 12 II CHRONICLES 20:1-30.

Prayer: Our Father in Heaven, May the nations learn in times of danger to trust Thee, and cease to lean upon the sword. Thy prophet spake, and the king's army was unused because not needed. In Christ we learn that Thou art the Father of all peoples, and that Thou art pleased when Thy children dwell together in peace.

May our rulers heed the prophets who today are

May our rulers heed the prophets who today are pleading for peace, and planning for a sisterhood of nations answering to our Christ-given ideal of the brotherhood of man. For Jesus' sake, Amen. "Out of my distress I called upon the Lord;
The Lord answered me and set me in a large place.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; What can man do unto me?

what can man do unto mer
The Lord is on my side among them that help me;
Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that

hate me.
It is better to trust the Lord
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust the Lord

Than to put confidence in princes."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 900 B. C. Places, The house of the Lord in Jerusalem, cliff of Ziz, and wilderness of Tekoa ten or eleven miles southeast of Jerusalem. Persons, Jehoshaphat the king, Jahaziel the prophet, musicians from among the Levites, the people of Jerusalem, and the army of the allies, namely Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunim.

Scripture Setting: The text presents one of God's mighty deliverances. Compare, deliverance from Egypt, Ex. 14:1-31. Destruction of Sennacherib's army, 2 Kings 19:20-37. Song of deliver-

ance, Ex. 15-1-18. Hymn of the promised land, Psa. 105.

Life and Conduct Setting: Here is shown the power of national prayer, for Jehoshaphat and his people cast themselves on God. 1. The king set the example of prayer, standing before the people, and praying with them and for them. 2. He honors the great men of the past by appealing to God as the "God of our fathers." 3. Experience helps prayer. The king remembers God's providences and deliverances in the past, and appeals for present help to the same mighty Deliverer.

A GREAT VICTORY WITHOUT A BATTLE.

Point of Contact. The prophet bade Jehoshaphat have faith in God. That was worth more than a great army. We as modern nations may have that and more that Jehoshaphat could not have. In those tribal times he could not have faith in neighboring peoples for they were treacherous and warlike. But in these Christian times the nations have faith one in another. They are bound together by trade and travel and international law and courts of arbitration, and the acknowledged kingship of Christ. We need more both of faith in God and in one another, and less in standing armies and battle ships.

As most difficulties between men can be settled by faith and friendliness and prayer, so it is with nations. God will hear when His people, and their rulers, come to Him in real need and in real faith.

A Standing Army Unused. Jehoshaphat's army is listed at 1,160,000, the largest attributed to any king of the southern kingdom. Some of these may have been lost in the unfortunate campaign with Ahab, but his fighting force must still have been a commanding one. Not a shield was lifted, not a bow was bent, not a spear hurled. The time had come to re-enforce among the people of Judah a forgotten lesson of their fathers. Moses at the Red Sea had commanded the terrified people to "stand still and see the salvation of God." But the people were prone to put their trust "in chariots and in

horses," and to forget the name of their God. The very greatness of Jehoshaphat's army made it a menace to faith in God, and the prophet sets it all aside; he does not reserve a Gideon's band from it. There are weapons of destruction best used when unused, and it was so with Judah's army.

"If drunk with sight of power we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
And lesser breeds without the law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget."

The Policy of the Prophets. Faith, not force, was the policy of the prophets. Isaiah rebuked the people of his day for "refusing the waters of Shiloh that go softly," and seeking the help of Syria. Jeremiah cried out against their "gadding about to go down into Egypt." A simple life of peace and trust and independence was the prophetic And Jehovah, the Ancient of Days, was to be their "Shield and Defender." In the moment of crisis, when the army of the allies was at En-gedi, Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah, and when they had come together to seek the Lord, a strange prophet appeared, bringing a revival of the old political policy of faith in Jehovah. Jahaziel appealed to the king and his people in language that should have been familiar to them; "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." Then

he bade them go down the next day not to fight but to gather the spoils of war from the fields of a self-destroyed enemy. And they went down not with soldiers but with singers, children of the Kohathites and of the Korahites, making the way glorious with psalms, and chanting beforehand their paeans of victory and their processional odes.

The Nation Prays. A new court had been built to enlarge and beautify the temple areas, and thither the king called the nation to prayer. There he stood with them in a vast multitude, and there he prayed with them and for them. It was a great open-air meeting in the presence of God. And the king was never more kingly than when he bowed down thus in his royal robes, and acknowledged the higher Kingship Jehovah, and his own feebleness without Him. The master of a million of men cried out to God, saying, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee." Ah, then! They had learned the greatest lesson of life; they were looking to God. And now in few words, simple and sweet, the writer paints a most touching and beautiful picture; he says, "All Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children." Every "little one" was an added prayer. Every loved one that we present to God is a thousand-fold plea to Him. Surely God would take note of those helpless wives and babes and little boys and girls.

A great statesman, whom every reader would know if I should name him, said, "I have not taken a drink of liquor for years. I have a reason. I have a boy."

The Prayer was Answered. While the hill-sides were ringing with the temple songs of Judah the valley of En-gedi was strewn with the slain. Like beasts in a cage the fierce tribes of Moab and Ammon and of Mount Seir had turned on one another: first Moab and Ammon against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and then Moabites against Ammonites and Ammonites against Moabites, until "they were dead bodies, fallen to the earth." The people of Judah had gone out with praises; they returned laden with the spoils of a war fought by other hands than theirs. Such deliverance would remind them of the Exodus, when their fathers looked back and saw the bodies of the Egyptians washed ashore on the sands of the Red Sea. In the eyes of neighboring peoples the effect was greatly to enhance the prestige and security of the kingdom of Jehoshaphat.

The destruction of the Spanish Armada is in some ways a modern parallel. "It was in noble tone that England owed her debt to the storm that drove the Armada to its doom. On the medal that commemorated her triumph were graven the words, "The Lord sent His wind and scattered them." The pride of the conquerors was hushed before the sense of their mighty deliverance. It was not till England saw the broken host "fly with a southerly wind to the north,' that she knew what a weight of fear she had borne for thirty years."

The Power of Faith. The writer of the Chronicles teaches, by this incident, such faith in God as leads to the non-resistance of man. Jehovah did not need the smiting of a man's puny hand to help Him. He could dispense with soldiers and swords, and all the poor accourrements of war. The whole story is a protest against the support by the little state of Judah of the crushing weight of a great standing army. "It was shown conclusively that Judah could safely be contented not merely with an army smaller than those of its neighbors, but that she would be equally safe with no army at all."

But the world was not ready for this high teaching. Like other prophets Jahaziel outran the centuries. His lesson, however, is not lost. It rests in the heart of humanity wherever humanity seeks to be brotherly. Christ has re-enforced it with His doctrine of "the other cheek," and of the "putting up of the sword," and by His prayer on the cross.

Quiz and Study. 1. How did the people show their faith in the early morning after the king's prayer? v. 20. 2. What great promise did the king make to the people if they should believe in God and in His prophets? v. 20. 3. Instead of appointing captains of war whom did the king appoint, and what for? v. 21. 4. To whom did the people attribute the victory at last? v. 27. 5. In what public place did they gather to express their joy? v. 28. 6. What name do we give to such occasions?

Practical Thoughts. The story has good cheer for us as we bear our protest against political and social evils. "If we had to defend everything and fight everything in our own strength, the case would be perfectly different; but God says to us, 'Ye have this treasure in earthen vessels; the excellency of the power is of God and not of man.'' When Frederick Douglass expressed a doubt as to the issues of the struggle in the early sixties, Sojourner Truth impatiently cried out, "Frederick, Frederick, is God dead?" National faith in God is worth more than an army. Without faith France had her revolution and her reign of terror. With faith little Switzer-

and her reign of terror. With the land has been a happy republic for many centuries.

Each one of us has his battle to fight. It is the battle of life. If we win we must pray. "He battle of life. If we win we must pray. "Emakes best time who marches on his knees."

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

Now it came to pass, that at what time the



was brought unto the king's office by the

hand of the Levites. and when they



saw that there was much money, the king's

and the high priest's officer came and



and took it, and carried it to his place again.



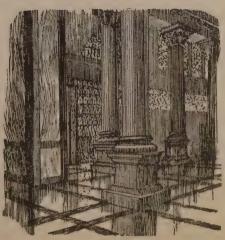
and gathered money in abundance. And the

and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the Lord, and hired

by



to repair the house of the Lord, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the



of the Lord.

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II CHRON. XXIV: 11-12.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 24:4-14.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help us to have reverence for the outward appointments of Thy service, for the house that is named for Thee, and for the gifts of Thy faithful ones whereby they build and repair. But grant above all that Thy name may be hallowed in our hearts; that we ourselves may be temples of Thy Holy Spirit; and that we may ever worship Thee in spirit and in truth, remembering that Thou dost seek such service. In the name and Spirit of Thy Son Jesus, Amen.

"There ought to be such an atmosphere in every Christian church, that a man going and sitting there should take the contagion of Heaven, and carry home a fire to kindle the altar whence he came."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 856 B. C. Place, Jeru-Persons, Joash or Jehoash the king, Jesalem. hoiada the high priest, the king's scribe, the high

priest's officer, priests, Levites and workmen.
Scripture Setting: The lesson presents one step in a great movement, namely, the long struggle in a great movement, namely, the long struggle against idolatry and in favor of the pure worship of God. Parallel account, 2 Kings, 12:1-16. Later history of Joash, 2 Chron. 24:15-27. Usurpation of Athaliah, the mother of Joash, 2 Chron. 22:10-12. Revolution headed by Jehoiada, and crowning of Joash, 2 Chron. 23. Salutation to Jerusalem and the temple, a pilgrim song, Psa. 122.

Life and Conduct Setting. In the following lesson Joash is represented as "the temple child" because he had been hidden in the temple and brought up in it.

Early associations have lasting influence. child he learned to love the temple, and later in life devoted himself to its restoration. The king's example was contagious. The people caught up his love for the temple, and gave joyfully and plentifully in answer to his calls. At last the king and people rejoiced in the beauty and perfection of their place of worship.

A REVIVAL AND A REFORMATION.

The Temple Child and his Love of the Temple. Joash was a "temple child." His grandmother, Athaliah, was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and she inherited the ambition, the ferocity and the idolatry of her mother. Upon the death of her son, king Ahaziah, she seized the throne, and to make it secure in her hands she attempted to murder all "the seed royal." There was a little grandson of whom she seems to have known nothing. The good priest Jehoiada and his wife secreted this child in the vast courts and numerous chambers of the temple, which were seldom seen by the idolatrous queen, till he was seven years old. The secret of the existence of this child Joash, and of his temple training, was kept perfectly from the idolatrous queen, so that at his coronation the revolution on the one hand and her surprise on the other were complete. Hearing the sound of the silver trumpets that proclaimed his coronation she rushed into the temple courts, there to see her little grandson standing in royal robes, and to read in the faces of the priests and people her own doom. Just outside the temple precincts she fell by the sword, and in her death there passed from Hebrew history the dark race of Jezebel.

It was fitting that the temple child who had become the king of Judah should show his love to the temple by planning its renewal. Much grows old and worn in a century and a quarter. Besides there had been troublous times, and much idolatry and

hoiada had taught the young king to love Jehovah, and from the larger love of the Lord sprang the lesser love of the Lord's house.

Perfunctory Priests. In his plans the king turned to the priests and Levites. He had a right to expect enthusiastic leadership from these ministers in holy things. But according to the account in the twelfth chapter of II Kings twenty-three years passed and nothing was done. The command had been, "see that ye hasten the matter." The chronicler significantly adds, "Howbeit the Levites hastened not." They had become mere functionaries. They waited at the altar for what there was in it, and were lazily willing to let well enough alone. It is among the sad features of religious history that in the hands of its ministers worship tends to become formal and stereotyped,

> "Icily regular, splendidly null; Dead perfection-no more."

In Hebrew history at least we must look to the prophets rather than to the priests for vitality and spirituality and progress. So indifferent and inactive were the priests that the king took the matter out of their hands. "The priests consented to receive no more money from the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house."

An Appeal to the People. The king's new plan created confidence and aroused latent enthusiasm. He had a chest made and placed at the gate of the temple. And he made a many faint hearts during those years. Je- proclamation "through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses the servant of the Lord laid upon Israel in the wilderness." Very likely the people distrusted the priests, and so had been withholding their gifts. When they saw a direct way to the work they rejoiced, and "brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end." This laymen's movement resulted in a glad abundance. The money was counted in the king's office by the king's scribe and the high priest's servant, and again and again the chest was replaced and refilled till the amount was sufficient for the work.

"The House of God in his State." It is with a note of pride that the writer says, "And they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it."

There is no better index of a town or city or nation than its churches. In southern Missouri there is a town called Liberal. Unbelievers tried to build it without churches, or Bibles, or preachers, or Sunday-schools. It got so bad that the railroad company threatened never to stop a train there. Decent people moved out. At last to save the town they had to build churches and invite preachers and open Sunday-schools.

An Illinois town of less than four thousand population has within recent years spent \$55,000 on two new churches; \$40,000 on a Young Men's Christian association building; and is now building another church at a cost of \$50,000. The people pride themselves in this, and point to their churches as a sign of their prosperity. So the Hebrew pilgrims sang as they went up to Jerusalem to worship,

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

One Step in a Great Movement. The repairing of the temple is but one feature of a national movement of great significance. Baalism and kindred idolatries had threatened the very life of Judah and the worship of Jehovah. Under the statesmanlike administration of Jehoiada and the work of the prophets not named in the lesson the people were aroused and enlisted. There came a revival of the true and pure worship of Jehovah, and a reformation ensued. It was a religious and political necessity to dethrone Athaliah; to enthrone a son of David; to centralize the worship; to throw down the high places; to strengthen the order of the Levites; and to enrich and protect the ritual of the worship of God. It was a long process, and other centuries were required for its completion. But at last it gave the people a saving toughness, and united them in a grand state church, the earthen vessel of a treasure too precious to be lost, the treasure of ethical monotheism. From the days of Elijah to the days of Jehojada unclean Baalism threatened the clean worship of Jehovah, and the world's best hope hung in the balance while the war waged. This lesson is one of the battlefields in that long warfare.

Greater than the King. It is not always the man in the limelight who does the work. There was a man who had saved the life of Joash, and protected him, and educated him, and crowned him, and inspired and directed him. As long as this man lived Joash did what was right, and he and his kingdom were prospered and blessed. No sooner had he passed away than the fickle king went wrong. He listened to the counsel of idolatrous princes, and forsook the glorious temple that he had so proudly repaired.

This good man was the priest Jehoiada, who died at a hundred and thirty years of age, and was so honored that they buried him in the city of David among the kings. All his life he was a prince and a power among men. He never wavered. From first to last he was loyal. He was not only priest to the souls of men, but also prime minister of his state and nation. Such men are God's best gifts. Through them He makes progress possible and history glorious. Through them he establishes righteousness, and makes truth as radiant as suns and stars that shine forever.

"Were a star quenched on high, For ages would its light. Still travelling downward through the sky, Shine on our mortal sight.

"So when a great man dies, For years beyond our ken, The light he leaves behind him lies Upon the paths of men."

Quiz and Study. 1. Who was the uncrowned ruler of Judah during the early years of Joash? 2. What is the significance of appealing to the people when the priests failed? 3. Did Joash succeed in ridding the land of the high places and the idols? 2 Kings 12:3. 4. What classes of workmen are named in the lesson? v. 12. 5. What compliment is paid to these workmen? 2 Kings 12:15.

Practical Thoughts. When the opportunity was

afforded the people gave joyfully. All our worship should come from the heart and should be leavened with gladness. "If ye love me keep my commandments." Out of love we are privileged to sing and praise and pray; we should find pleasure in giving and in forgiving; in building and burden-bearing, in conflict and in victory. The religion of God and of Christ is the soul of optimism. "Re-

joice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice.''
A dilapidated church building bespeaks a de-lapidated faith. A traveler who has been through India says that Hinduism is dying; its temples are decaying and there is no enthusiasm to repair them. It is the picture of a dead religion that Byron paints in his "Siege of Corinth."

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

UZZIAH KING OF JUDAH HUMBLED

And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to



unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron,



that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the

for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.

Then Uzziah was wroth, and had



to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests,



the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the

in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief



and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he.



was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him

from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 26:16-23.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We know that in the days when all is well with us we are most apt to forget Thee. Our hearts are prone to be lifted up by reason of our good health, or our fair looks, or our full store-houses, or our superior learning and culture. Help us therefore to be most on guard when the world seems best to us, and in days of prosperity may we be most thankful to Thee, remembering that Thou art the Giver of all good gifts, and that Thou dost desire Thy bounties to be received as blessings. In the name of Thy Son Jesus, Amen.

"But man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven,
As make the angels weep."

-Shakespeare.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting. Time, somewhere between 765 and 758 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Uzziah the king of Judah, Azariah the priest, eighty priests, and Jotham the king son.

Scripture Setting. Parallel record, very brief, 2 Kings 14:21-22. The pride of Nebuchadnezzar humbled, Daniel 4:1-37. The pride of Belshazzar humbled, Daniel 5:1-31. The pride and the calamity of Sennacherib, 2 Chron. 32:1-23. The Savior's parable of humility, Luke 14:7-11.

Life and Conduct Setting. Uzziah's reign of fifty-two years is the longest with one exception

of any of the kings of Judah. He was successful in war, vv. 6-8. He was devoted to the husbandry of cattle, v. 10. He made Judaea with Jerusalem as its center a great military power and employed "cunning" men to invent new weapons of war, vv. 11-15. Success set its crown on all that he did. Uzziah was a worshiper of Jehovah, and in his earlier years came under the influence of a godly man by the name of Zechariah. It was in his later years that he became haughty and sacrilegious and fell a victim to pride "which eats up itself."

A ROYAL OUTCAST.

Point of Contact. We all know of the impeachment of Andrew Johnson, the seventeenth president of the United States, and the successor of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Johnson was acquitted by a very close vote on the part of the United States senate. Had he not been acquitted we can imagine him cast aside by his party and his country, and going away to live and die in shame, with the brand of his country on him. We are today glad that it was not so.

There is a sense in which Uzziah's leprosy was an impeachment. The writer of Chronicles presents it as the Lord's impeachment because of his pride and his sin. He went away in shame, and lived in a separate house, and died of a terrible disease. He could no more visit the temple or go abroad among the people. He was a royal outcast.

A Promising Character. King Uzziah came to the throne of Judah at an unpromising age. He was only sixteen years old. His father, Amaziah, had foolishly gone out to war with the northern kingdom, and had been defeated, and four hundred cubits of the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down, and the temple had been plundered, and its treasures carried to Samaria. Following this the people conspired against him, and he was slain at Lackish.

However, there was enthusiasm over the royal boy, for it is said, "all the people of Judah took Uzziah and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah."

It is well for a king so young and inex-

perienced to have the guidance of some one older and wiser, just as Joash, who was only seven when he began to reign, found himself under the care of the wise priest Jehoiada. There is just a hint given us that Uzziah had such a counsellor. It is said, "He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God." This man was one of the great company of the unknown and unheralded moulders of men: quiet teachers and prophets and priests, who do their work behind the scenes, and are real makers of history. It was in his days that Uzziah "sought God," and "did what was right in the sight of the Lord." There is no better promise of a strong and brave life than that a young man should admire the spirit and follow the instructions of such a teacher. It is teachableness that leads to the kingdom of greatness.

A Successful Reign. King Uzziah prospered greatly in war and in husbandry. It is much to say that a king is successful both in the arts of war and the arts of peace.

He conquered these old and troublesome enemies of his people, the Philistines, breaking down their city walls, and building other cities as he pleased; he overcame certain Arabians, and the people of Gur-baal, a place now unknown, and carried his victorious arms as far as Egypt. His fame was such that the Ammonites paid tribute to him, thus acknowledging his lordship seemingly without a battle. He had a great army for so small a kingdom. There were three hundred

seven thousand and five hundred men in it, and he encouraged the invention of new arms and new ways of fighting. He built towers on the walls of Jerusalem, and put on them great machines for shooting arrows and hurling stones. The Romans called these rude, primitive machines catapults, and Uzziah is the first king of Judah that adopted them. It helped to make him famous and dreadful. "His name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped till he was strong," says the chronicler.

"He loved husbandry." And we love to hear that said of him, for we live in a land of wonderful fields and vineyards and orchards, and we know how much of wealth and prosperity there is in great crops and great herds of stock. Palestine has very fertile valleys and hills and mountain sides, and the vineyards that Uzziah planted, and the wells that he digged, and the towers of defense that he built must have helped the people mightily, and added greatly to their wealth. It is hard to realize what a full half century of such a reign must have meant to the people and king of Judah. It must have been to them what the reign of Queen Elizabeth was to the people of England in the sixteenth century, and what the reign of Queen Victoria was in the nineteenth.

Pride, Rage, Ruin. "But when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction." We have seen trees in full leaf and casting great shadows suddenly broken by a storm, and then we have seen how the worms had eaten into their hearts. Outwardly the king was victorious and rich; inwardly his character was eaten out by pride. Isaiah, who began his prophecies in the last days of Uzziah, describes the people as being drunken and luxurious, and as mocking at righteousness, and as a vineyard bearing wild grapes, and "sinning as it were with a cart rope." In the eyes of such a people king Uzziah, victorious, rich, must have seemed on the upgrade and near the very top of glory, when suddenly there came like a storm the occasion that revealed his inner, downgrade life. He became so haughty and conceited that nothing was sacred to him. He even violated the law of the temple by going in to burn incense, an act of worship that should have been performed only by consecrated priests, "the sons of Aaron."

The Bible presents to us other examples of men who became rich and great and foolish. Solomon's wealth was fabulous. He received in one year eighteen millions of dollars' worth of gold; he built great palaces, and a temple on which he spent money by millions; his merchantmen traversed the seas, and his fame reached to Assyria and Egypt and Ethiopia. But he fell at last into idolatry, ensnared by his foreign wives.

Nebuchadnezzar, victorious, rich, and a mighty builder, walked proudly amidst his palaces and hanging gardens, saying, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Suddenly, "while the word was in his mouth," the kingdom was taken from him; he became insane, and was driven

out to live like a beast in the fields.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." There is the fable of a frog which tried to be as big as an ox. and swelled and swelled himself till he burst and fell "stone dead." Napoleon's ambition got the better of him. Paine's brilliancy made him an infidel. The rich man's bursting barns robbed him of his

Eighty brave priests with Azariah as their leader stood to rebuke the sacrilegious king and he became enraged. They said to him, "Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed." But their rebuke was not needed. While they spoke the whiteness of leprosy rose in his forehead, right where his proud crown had rested, and in his terror he rushed out of the temple, nevermore to be

a man among men. No sadder picture can be drawn than that of the lonely king, in "a several house," slowly dying of a wasting disease; brooding in memory over his better days, and not forgetting that awful hour of temple desecration and of fierce anger at the priests of his God. And to crown his sorrow, he must have known, being a leper, that he could not be buried with his royal fathers, but in a field aside from them. It is more terrible than the rebuke of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, for he was permitted to repent and return to his kingdom. But from king Uzziah's leprosy and loneliness there was no return. The inscription that Dante places

on the gate of hell is this:

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

Quiz and Study. 1. Were the conditions favorable to a successful reign when Uzziah came to the throne? 2. How large an influence may we attribute to the young king's counsellor, Zechariah?
3. From the viewpoint of his long and outwardly prosperous reign should we count Uzziah as among the greatest kings of Judah! 4. What in general is the picture that Isaiah draws of the kingdom in the last years of Uzziah? Isaiah, 5. 5. Does there always lurk spiritual danger in material prosperity

Practical Thought. In what is known as the pearl of parables the prodigal son is represented as going away from his father in pride and returning in prayer. "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy eight. Make me as one of thy hired servants."

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

HEZEKIAH THE GOOD KING

He in the first year of his reign, in the first month,



of the house of the Lord, and repaired them. And he brought in the



and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east



And said
unto them,
Hear me, ye
Levites,
sanctify
now yourselves, and
sanctify the
house of the
Lord God
of your
fathers, and



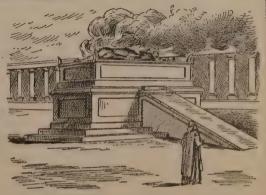
the filthiness
out of the
holy place. For
our fathers have
trespassed,
and done that
which was



in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and



and have not burned incense nor offered



in the holy place unto the God of Israel.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 29:1-19.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, We thank Thee for the kings and prophets who have been great enough to know Thy will and to do it; who have turned away from uncleanness, and brought order out of disorder, light out of darkness, and hope out of despair. We ask Thee for singleness of heart

that we too may worship Thee in temples made clean by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, even in our own bodies and lives, cleansed from sin and made fit dwelling places for the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 726 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Hezekiah the king of Judah, priests, Levites, and rulers of the city.

Scripture Setting: Brief parallel account, 2 Kings 18:1-7. For prophetic description of conditions at the time of Hezekiah's accession, Isajah 5. Evil and idolatrous reign of Ahaz, 2 Chron. 28.

Life and Conduct Setting: Conditions had become dreadful when Hezekiah came to the throne, and he immediately sought a remedy. He began at the center of the religious, and therefore also of the political, life of the nation, namely the temple and the temple worship. His speech to the negligent priests and Levites, vv. 5-11, is in true prophetic and kingly style, showing a wise analysis of the national trouble and its remedy. The heart-

iness with which the priests and Levites entered on the work, the filthiness of the temple and its cleansing, and the restoration of the sacred vessels, are vividly described in the remainder of the lesson.

"Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson; they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 1;16-20,

THE KING OF THE OPEN TEMPLE.

Point of Contact. We are so blessed in this land of religious liberty and Christian graces that comparison with such new life and joy as must have come to the hearts of many a saintly Jew when Hezekiah reopened the temple are hard to find. But in the great island of Madagascar there was a recent incident that may help us. For many years the native Christians have been persecuted, first by their own cruel rulers, and later by French officials. Recently a new governor general was appointed by France, and when a petty official forbade the native Christians to rebuild a ruined church, this new and more generous ruler promptly issued an order that the people must not be interfered with in their work of church erection. Now therefore, those good people have the joy and enthusiasm that come of building and rebuilding their houses of holy worship.

Open Doors Once More. It is a sad picture we have here of the temple closed and deserted. That temple was the religious and political center of the nation, and to close it was a blow at once to both the church and state. But Ahaz had become so mad with idolatry that he cut to pieces the vessels of the temple, closed its doors, and built altars "in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city of Judah." He surfeited in

idolatry.

And now it is delightful to see king Hezekiah, in the first year of his reign, in the ardor and glory of his young manhood, throwing open those doors, as though he

were drawing near to the God of his fathers, and inviting Jehovah to return and dwell again among the people. "Sixteen years of licensed idolatry must have fostered all that was vile in the country, and have put wicked men in authority, and created numerous vested interests connected by close ties with idolatry, notably the priests of all the altars and high places." Meanwhile the priests of God and the Levites had been driven away from the polluted temple and scattered. The opening of the temple doors was the sign of a great change, a reversal of the national policy, a reformation, a war on idolatry and its evils, and a new attitude toward God. It was a brave, strong, manly deed on the part of the king. It was better than the winning of a battle. It was a victory, and the begin-

ning of a godly and victorious reign.

A Sermon from the Throne. In one speech Hezekiah made of his throne a pulpit and of his pulpit a throne. It is both an edict and a sermon that we have in verses five to eleven of the lesson. The king was the preacher. The place was the open space east of the temple. The audience was made up of the priests and Levites, scattered and discouraged by Ahaz, and now recalled. The theme concerned matters of state, of the church, of the good of the people, and the

pleasure of God.

The royal preacher speaks in commanding, kingly style. He says, "Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy

place." This was the beginning, following which he reminds them of the evils and idolatries that cursed the land, the wrath of the Lord, the "hissings" of other nations, and the ravages of war. He brings his oration to its conclusion with a declaration and an exhortation. He declares that it is in his heart to make a covenant with God, and he exhorts his audience not to be negligent in their duties. Virtually he said to them, "Do it now."

A House Made Fit for a Heavenly Guest. There were months of preparation in England for the coronation of King George the Fifth. No pains were spared to make his palaces and courts and cathedrals beautiful and attractive. The nation was thrilled by the coming of the king to his throne and his crown. It is a very true and noble sentiment that prepares thus for a royal guest. How much more should His own house be prepared for the return and the residence of Jehovah! Hezekiah felt that he could not pray the Lord to return to His people till he had cleansed the place of His abode.

Sixteen years of neglect in a place where there had been so many sacrifices of oxen and rams and lambs must have left the great house in a frightful condition. words "uncleanness," and even "filthiness," are used in describing it. They began in the "inner part of the house," and they were eight days in reaching the "porch." Companies of Levites carried the refuse far down to the brook Kidron, and it was sixteen days before "they made an end." Then they came to the king and told how they had cleansed the temple and the altar and the table of shewbread and the vessels. How different that great building must have seemed after those sixteen days! Now it was a thing of beauty with its shining walls and white marble floors, its burnished altars and tables, its golden and silver vessels washed and glowing, and its marble porches dazzling white once more. That cleansed temple is an emblem of the "clean hands and pure hearts" all should have who invite God to dwell with them.

A Royal Rededication. The king again appeared before the open doors, and within the courts that were cleansed, this time accompanied by the rulers of the city, and the priests and Levites. And they offered for a sin offering four times seven beasts, sprinkling the blood on the altar. The large brotherly heart of the king is shown

in that he commanded this sacrifice as an atonement, not for Judah only, but for "all Israel."

And the whole congregation worshipped, bowing low, and they had a great orchestra and chorus, "and the trumpeters sounded and the singers sang." "They sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped." To crown the day of this rededication they brought with a free heart thank offerings and peace offerings to the number of six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep!

An Index of the King's Life. This initial act is an index of Hezekiah's life and reign. Through all his days the temple doors stood open inviting the people to worship, and speaking of the presence of Jehovah. And we know that in one dreadful hour the good king himself passed through those open doors to lay a threatening letter before the Lord and pray for the salvation of his people, and that the Lord heard his prayer and answered it marvellously. He threw open not only the doors of the temple but also the doors of his heart to Jehovah, the God of his fathers. When in the days of David they dedicated Jerusalem, they stood before her walls and sang:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
Even lift them ye everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall come in."
Ah! Such a beautiful "open-door policy." We all love the king of Judah who stands thus inviting the King of glory.

Quiz and Study. 1. When and by whom was the temple built? 2 Chron. 3, 4, 5. 2. What had been the action of Ahaz in regard to the temple? 3. What does the closing of the temple indicate as to the religious condition of the people at large? 4. How many kinds of offerings are named in the lesson? 5. What is the Jewish, and what the Christian meaning of sacrifice? 6. What great prophet helped Hezekiah, and guided and inspired him? 7. Can you think of a better indication of character than one's attitude toward the church?

Practical Thoughts. In the New Testament we ourselves are called "temples of God," and our bodies "temples of the Holy Spirit." Some of us have lived closed lives to God, and our hearts need cleansing that the Holy Spirit may dwell in them. He who loves sin and keeps it in his heart, and does unholy things, is like the closed and filthy temple. He must repent, and be forgiven, and cleansed by Christ, before he can "glorify God."

A clean life is more beautiful even than a clean temple.

Hezekiah and his people came to the clean temple with sacrifices and music and joy. True religion brings true joy. Jesus says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

As Hezekiah was "the king of the open doors,"

As Hezekiah was "the king of the open doors," so we should be people of open, royal hearts for Christ and His church.

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem, kept the



of unbread days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests



the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord.

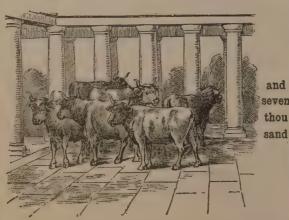
And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace



and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers.

And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness.

For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand



and seven thou-



and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves.

II CHRON. XXX: 21-24.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 30:1-27.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Wilt Thou help us to remember that Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us, and wilt Thou help us to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. May we know that the spirit of our worship is first, and that the forms of it are secondary. Though all other rules should perish, may we never fail in the law of love; and living, and laboring, and worshipping according to that law, may we be forever acceptable to Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, Nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation"

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 726 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Hezekiah the king of Judah, priests, Levites, and a great throng of worshippers from the kingdoms both of Israel and Judah.

Scripture Setting: This feast follows immediately upon the cleansing of the neglected temple, Chap. 29. Original command to keep the passover, Ex. 13:1-16, Deut. 16:1-8. Song of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem, Psalm 125.

Life and Conduct Setting: During the first month of the initial year of his reign Hezekiah cleansed the temple and reopened it. According to the law the feast should have been kept in that month. But as this was impossible and as the king and people, now newly awakened religiously, did not

feel that they could omit this great memorial feast entirely, they decided to keep it in the second month.

-Psalm 24.

In breadth of brotherliness they sought to make it a feast for Israel as well as Judah, that is, for all the Hebrew race.

In their enthusiasm they doubled the days of the feast, making it fourteen instead of seven, another irregularity sanctioned of God because of the spirit in which it was done. These two great deeds, the cleansing of the temple and the keeping of the feast in the very beginning of his reign, were strokes both of piety and statesmanship on the part of the young king.

A KING OF BREADTH AND BROTHERLINESS.

Point of Contact. In our great missionary conventions we frequently decorate our halls with the flags of many nations. Side by side may be seen our own "Old Glory," as we fondly call her, and Great Britain's Union Jack, and China's Yellow Dragon. and the sunrise symbol of Japan, and the Persian Lion, and the Turkish Crescent, and many another from many an island, state and continent. It is a beautiful expression of breadth and brotherliness, and of that deeper spirit of loyalty to the one God and Father of all, "Who is over all, and through all, and in all," which must at last unite the nations. It is something of this spirit that Hezekiah has when he invites the people of the northern kingdom to unite with his own people in the passover feast. It is a new note of brotherliness after many generations of ill will.

A Royal Invitation. "Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel." It is well to note this whole text for it is so full of breadth and brotherliness and devotion. He is a magnanimous man who can forget old feuds, and long cherished prejudices, and bitter quarrels, in an effort just simply to worship God. This was a royal invitation because it came from the king, but better still because it is so wholehearted, and unselfish, and inclusive. It is

like the bands of the blue and the gray on opposite sides of the river, for a while taunting each other with "Dixie" and "The Star Spangled Banner," but at last uniting their music, and making the night memorable, with the melody of "Home, Sweet Home."

King and Congregation Pleased. The law was that the passover should be kept in the first month. But that was impossible. The priests were not sanctified and their purification would require seven days. The people were not assembled and could not be in so short a time. In addition to all else, to hold a passover in the neglected and filthy temple was not to be thought of. They resorted to what we should call case law, and found in the book of Numbers, the ninth chapter. an instance of certain men who could not keep the feast in the first month, and were allowed by Moses to keep it the second month. Acting on this the king and people decided that irregularity in worship was better than no worship at all, and were pleased to be able to keep the feast in the second month. There is a rigid and deadly way of keeping religious laws and forms and ceremonies, and there is a life-giving way of modifying them. It is the spirit that gives life; the mere letter kills. The Savior himself, instead of sacrificing a ram or a lamb in the temple, took a scourge of cords and drove out the flocks of sacrificial beasts, and rebuked the extortionate tradesmen, and overthrew their money tables, and declared

that they had made the place "a den of thieves." Today we can see that the Savior's lash for thieves was more religious than the sacrifice of a bullock would have been. And Hezekiah was broad enough to see that the soul of religion lies deeper than the mere laws and forms that gather around it. He was pleased to be irregular for the

greater good.

Not as the Fathers. Ordinarily we are told to follow the examples of our fathers. But Hezekiah asks the people of Israel and Judah not to be like their fathers. Sometimes the examples of the fathers are the best ones not to follow. If the fathers are proud and stubborn and idolatrous; if they are drunken and profane and dissipated; if they close their eyes to truth, and set themselves against progress; if they make a mockery of virtue, and laugh at sincerity, and sneer at piety and prayer; if they belittle Christ and His church, and the Bible and God, it is well not to follow their exam-When the fathers fall into the ditch they are a warning to us rather than an example.

If Paul had been like his fathers he could not have been an Apostle, for they were Pharisees. If Luther had been like his fathers he could not have been a reformer. If George Washington had been like his fathers in Great Britain he never could have been the father of our country. Progress means that we shall save what is good in our fathers, imitate their virtues, avoid their mistakes, and go forward where they leave off. It is all right for the boy in kilts to believe just like his father does, if his father is at all sane and good. But when he is a man he should have a faith of his own, and be able to give a reason for it.

Crude Mockery of a Kingly Welcome. King Hezekiah sent his letters of invitation by special carriers through the country and cities of the northern kingdom, bidding them to turn again to the Lord, and to their brethren and children; reminding them that God was waiting for them in grace and mercy, and that He would not turn from them if they would return to Him. But for the most part they were so crude and sunken in idolatry that they laughed at the message and mocked the messengers.

But there were noble and devout people among those tribes, who humbled themselves and accepted the kingly welcome to Jerusalem, and there God gave them one heart to worship with their brethren from whom they had been long separated. Maybe it was at this time that the 133rd Psalm was written,

beginning,

Behold how good and pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity.

Truth Fighting Falsehood. To love the good is to hate the evil. The more one devotes himself to truth the more he opposes falsehood. When the people grew enthusiastic in this great passover worship they began to make war on the idols that were yet in Jerusalem, and they took them and their altars, and cast them contemptuously into the brook Kidron. As the priests and Levites had cleansed the temple so now the people cleansed the city.

A Wonderful Way of Giving. There is another indication of king Hezekiah's breadth and brother-liness. He had a wonderful way of giving to support the temple service. He set an example for all his people. He gave a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep. The princes, inspired by his ex-ample, gave a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep. Such was the generosity and enthusiasm that they were enabled to continue the feast another seven days with prolonged gladness. Perhaps the guests that the king had invited from the far nothern tribes were unable to bring their sac-rifices with them. In that case Hezekiah and his people entertained them royally by their princely

giving.

Answered Prayers of a Right-hearted Ruler. There were many of the invited guests who had not prepared themselves for the feast according to the Mosaic law for cleansing. "They did eat the passover otherwise than as it was written." For these guests the generous king prayed this short, beautiful, heart-felt prayer: "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." The Lord answered this prayer and received the worship of those who, having the heart preparation, yet lacked the legal preparation for the resulting for the worship.

Nothing in all his reign speaks so much for the king's great and true heart as the incidents of this passover. We love him when we see him so brotherly toward all, so generous in his giving, so fervent in his prayers, so like a child in simplicity, and so like a hero in his reformation of religion. "When the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway, many things are made clear that else lie hidden in darkness."

Quiz and Study. 1. Of what great event was the passover a memorial? 2. In what month was it observed according to the law? 3. Was Hezekiah justified in holding it a month later, and if so why? 4. What was the effect of the invitation to the people of the northern kingdom? 5. Is religion primarily a matter of laws and forms or of the

heart and life?

Practical Thought. As long as there was one idol left in Jerusalem the city was not cleaned from idolatry. When Madagascar became Christian the Hovas took down their idols and burned them. But the queen tried to play a double role. She kept a little black idol about three inches long, and wore it as an amulet about three inches long, and wore it as an amulet about her neck. It was her darling idol—her pet sin. At last she came to the missionaries and gave it up, for she found that she could not be a Christian as long as she cherished that little black image. It is so with our sins. If we would be right with God we must not keep a single one of them.

MANASSEH'S SIN AND REPENTANCE

Now after this he



without
the city of
David, on
the west
side of
Gihon, in
the valley,
even to the
entering in
at the fish



and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of



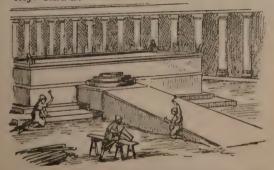
in all the fenced cities of Judah And he took away the strange



out of the house of the Lord, and all the



that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he



of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank



and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 33:1-16.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, We praise Thee for this, that when men have gone astray they may return to Thee. We thank Thee that in every age there has come the call to repentance, and there has been granted the promise of forgiveness, and therefore of reconciliation and restoration. Thou art a Father, and Thou dost look for Thy returning children, and run to meet them, and Thou dost kiss them, and present them anew with Thy robe and ring, and Thou dost make feasts for them, and bring them forever into the old home. And we thank Thee for Christ, who together with Thy prophets, has revealed this to us. In His name. Amen.

"True repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin, and broken from sin. Some often repent, yet never reform. They resemble a man travelling in a dangeraous path, who frequently starts and stops, yet never turns back."—Thorn-

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, his captivity, 680 to 678 B. C. Places, Jerusalem and Babylon. Persons, Manasseh the king of Judah, the king of Assyria and his army, and the people of Judah.

Scripture Setting: Parallel account, 2 Kings 21: 1-16. The chastening of the Lord, Psa. 94:12, Heb. 12:5-11. God's pardon, Micah 7:18-20. Parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15:11-24.

Life and Conduct Setting: It is sad to think of so bad a son as Manasseh to so good a father as Hezekiah. Probably his evil and idolatrous associations explain it. He undid what his father had done. He made the whole land sinful and idolatrous. His evil example was easily followed, because he was the king. He was no half-and-half character, however; he went the full length of his sinful course. He put an idol in the very temple, and burnt his own children in sacrifice to his hideous gods. His repentance under punishment is the best we know about him, and God's mercy in forgiving such a sinner is wonderful.

WICKEDNESS WIDE OPEN.

Point of Contact. Sometimes in our towns and cities mayors and councilmen are elected on what is known as "the wide open policy." Then the saloon keepers and gamblers and grafters, and the keepers of vile resorts rejoice, for they know that they will not be molested. Having the authorities on their side they sin openly, boldly, and brazenly. It is wonderful how terribly wicked such a place may become in a short time.

In Judah the idolaters rejoiced when the king came over to their side, and helped them. They threw Jerusalem open to the worst forms of idol worship, and the cruelties and superstitions and vileness that accompany such worship. The city and nation

were wide open to wickedness.

Manasseh the Idolater. It is hard to realize that the son of Hezekiah could have been so abandoned to idolatry as Manasseh was. The explanation may be that he was a mere child, and that he came under the influence of idolatrous teachers, and of a party of idolaters that had lingered all through the reign of his father. It was the company he kept that led to his undoing.

His evil, it is said, was "like unto the abominations of the heathen." That is the severest thing the writer of Chronicles could say. He knew nothing worse than the things the heathen did, just as missionaries today tell us that there can be nothing worse than the things that are done in the name of religion by the worshippers of idols in such lands as Africa and India and China. Things which in our land are done secretly and in laws, idolaters do openly, and without shame, and as a part of their worship. So the holy heart of the Hebrew writer, revolting against it all, used the strong word "abominations."

Manasseh rebuilt the images and altars of Baal and Ashtoreth that his father had destroyed, and the groves and the high places were reopened to the vile songs and dances of the idolaters. Still worse, he brought in new forms of idolatry. He set the example to his people of the worship of Moloch, the ancient Canaanite god, a human figure with a bull's head and horns, and outstretched arms, into which children were placed that they might roll down into the red-hot furnace over which the idol stood. He introduced also Sabaism or star worship. He worshiped all the host of heaven. the temple courts he built altars to the stars of the Zodiac, and images of horses and chariots dedicated to the sun. In the seventh chapter of Jeremiah we have a description of sun and star worship in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."

With star worship there were connected all the superstitions of astrology. They imagined that the sun and moon and stars controlled the earth and the destinies of men. The planets especially, by their rising and setting, and their peculiar colors, revealed the fate of people and nations. They wore shame, and against which we make severe | trinkets called amulets, in which they

thought the power of some special star was centered, and they imagined that it would protect them from harm, and make them fortunate. They borrowed this species of idolatry from Assyria, and there was no end to its superstitions. They built altars to the host of heaven, and offered sacrifices, and saluted the sun by kissing their hands to him. In short, Manasseh and his people hesitated at nothing in the way of idolatry. They worshipped every god that fancy suggested or superstition dictated, and they filled the land with vileness till "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint."

Manasseh a Prisoner. Could such conditions go on forever? Would the holy God of Israel permit them to continue? there not come a day of reckoning to such a king and people? There is a maxim which says, "it is a long lane which has no turn." Though the reign of Manasseh was the longest of any of the kings of Judah it was not all smooth and straight. There was a sad and shameful turn in it. He gave no heed to the warnings of the prophets, and there is an indication in the book of H Kings, Ch. 21. that he mercilessly killed the Jehovah worshippers who opposed him, for it is said. "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other.

At last the punishment came. We do not know the exact date, but we are told that, "Jehovah brought upon them the hosts of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and 'drove rings through his lips,' and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon." Thus the Lord called a halt to the mad king.

And there in chains and loneliness, like the prodigal son among the swine, he came to himself. He thought, and repented, and prayed to God. "He humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." Thus the sadness and shame of the chains and prison walls were turned into spiritual benediction and reformation and hope.

It is interesting to note that recent excavations in Gezer, an ancient city in the western part of Palestine, has brought to light two deeds to land made in the time of Manasseh. The conveyance was made by a notary with an Assyrian name, thus

indicating the power and influence of the Assyrians at that time.

Manasseh the Penitent. Manasseh remained "a penitent and a patriot." He sought to correct the evil that he had done. Bravely he took away the strange gods, and cast their images out of the temple and city, and restored the altar of Jehovah, and commanded the people to worship God.

It is sad to know that there were some things that the penitent king could not undo. He could not remove the stain of idolatry. He could not bring back the children he had burnt on the altars of Moloch. He could not

forget entirely his terrible days.

The historian tells us that God heard the prayers of the penitent king, and was entreated of him, and "brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom." It is wonderful that God would forgive one so abandoned to idolatry and all its shameful deeds, and who had done so much to degrade the people. But the Heavenly Father's mercy is great toward all who turn to him in sorrow and reformation. Jesus teaches us that in His prayer on the cross, when He cried out, asking the Father to forgive those who were mocking and erucifying Him.

Whittier puts it beautifully when he says

of Christ,

"Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy cross;
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound."

Quiz and Study. 1. Would it have been possible for the young king to have so completely committed the nation to idolatry if there had not been a strong party in favor of it? 2. What were some of the moral objections to the worship of idols? 3. Name the leading idols of the Manasseh cult. 4. What is the effect on a nation of a pure and noble religion? Of an impure and idolatrous one? 5. Is it better not to "sow wild oats," or to sow them and repent when the reaping time comes? Practical Thoughts. Deep wounds heal with a

Practical Thoughts. Deep wounds heal with a scar. Shameful sins may be repented of, but they leave ugly marks in the life and memory. It was brave, and even heroic, in Manasseh to turn squarely around; to break with his old party and companions; to seek new associates; and in every way live a new life. In comparison with a life of mistakes and corrections, how admirable was the life of that noble prince, Gustavus Adolphus, whose youthful prayer was, "God grant me so to live that I may ever live with Christ, and on earth may never blush for my own deeds."

DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

JOSIAH AND THE BOOK OF THE LAW

And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah



Shaphan. And



and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy



they do it. And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the



Lord, and have delivered it into the hands of the overseers, and to the hand of the

Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan



And it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the that



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS II CHRONICLES 34:14-28.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, Wilt Thou help us to thank Thee heartily for the struggles of the past by which truth has been brought to us. May we treasure in memory as Thy book does in history the names of prophets and priests and kings who fought for Thy holy name, and for Thy pure worship, and who gained victories over unholy idols and unclean altars. We thank Thee for the great teachers who prepared the way for greater

ones, and most of all for Christ, the Prophet, Priest and King above all others. In His name. Amen.

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord! Star of eternity! The only star By which the bark of man could navigate

The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss Securely," -Pollok.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, Reign of Josiah, 639 to 608 B. C. Finding of the book of the law, about 621 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Josiah the king, Hilkiah the priest, Shaphan the scribe, Ahikam, Abdon, Asaiah, Huldah the prophetess, and the elders and people of Judah and Jerusalem.

Scripture Setting: Idolatrous conditions in Judah at the accession of Josiah, 2 Chron. 33. Frophetic description, Jer. 2. Punishment threatened, Zeph. 1. Blessings and curses of the law, Deut. 28:1-19. Psalm celebrating the blessings of the law of the Lord, 119.

Life and Conduct Setting: The finding of this "book of the law of the Lord" was providential.

It was just what the king and the nation needed, and the Lord answered their need.

The real goodness of the king's heart is shown in his reverence for this book, and in the sorrow and reformation it caused him. Hardened hearts do not heed the word of God so readily.

Many scholars think the book found was the book we know as Deuteronomy. This is one of the most spiritual books in the Old Testament, and one of the most eloquent. Our Saviour often quoted from it.

A life or a nation guided by the teaching of such a book cannot go wrong.

A BRAVE KING AND A GOOD BOOK.

Point of Contact. An African prince, who was sent from an Ethiopian court on an embassy with costly presents to Queen Victoria, requested that her majesty would tell him the secret of England's greatness and glory. The queen handed him a beautifully bound copy of the Bible and said, "Tell your king that this is the secret of England's greatness." Just so it was Luther's Bible that made Germany great, and America's Bible that has made America great, and the Bible of the Hebrews that made them the greatest people in moral and spiritual ways of the ancient world.

"I have found the book of the law of the Lord." These simple words contain a startling announcement. Hilkiah the priest and Shaphan the scribe were engaged, under the command of Josiah, in repairing the temple. Hezekiah had cleansed the temple but it had not been repaired since the days of Joash, fully two centuries and a quarter before. It must have appeared weather-beaten and broken, and Josiah in his zeal for the worship of Jehovah had determined to repair it.

One good thing often leads to another. During the dark and dreadful times of the idolatrous kings the law of the Lord had been forgotten, and the temple worship corrupted. It may be that Manasseh had destroyed all the copies of the law that he could find, for even the priests and prophets were without Bibles, as we should say. It was while making the repairs that Hilkiah found the "book of the law of the Lord given by Moses."

Scholars think that this was the book we know as Deuteronomy, though the roll that Hilkiah found may have included other parts of the Old Testament. "No work of literature that has ever appeared has produced a greater sensation than this. It was read before the king, and he rent his clothes as he listened; a thrill of horror went through the nation at the denunciations of idolatry coming to light right in the midst of their idolatry."

A Scene in the Palace. The king sits on his throne, and the scribe Shaphan stands before him and unrolls the parchment leaves of a book dusty and yellow from long neglect. Ah! There it was indeed! the book that his aged men had told him of, but that he had not expected ever to see. He touches it with reverence, and curiously scans its ancient pages. Then he listens while the scribe reads, and if we can see in imagination what the king must have seen we shall not be surprised that he was mightily moved, and that he arose and rent his robes. There is in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of Deuteronomy the story of a recital of blessings and curses that is beautiful and terrible. Six tribes stood on mount Gerizim to pronounce blessings on the people if they would keep the law of the Lord; and just across the valley on mount Ebal stood the other six tribes to pronounce curses on the people if they would not keep the law. And there they stood, a great chorus of thousands upon thousands of voices pronouncing blessings,

and other thousands responding with curses. It was in this way that the majesty of the honored law was set forth, and the terrors of the violated law. And the king felt it as a king should who really loved his people.

In addition to all this king Josiah could recall some dreadful history that helped to make those curses more threatening to him. Just about a hundred years before his time Samaria had been destroyed by the Assyrians, and the people carried away into slavery. And in the days of his great-grandfather, Hezekiah, had not Sennacherib taken many cities of Judah, and had he not threatened Jerusalem? And his grandfather, Manasseh, had he not been a captive in Babylon? The king knew that the sins of his nation and the curses of the law were not to be taken lightly.

The Written Word and the Spoken Word. King Josiah, thoroughly aroused by the reading of the law, sent at once to inquire of the nearest prophet what to do. prophet was a woman named Huldah, who lived in the second quarter of the city.

Her answer to the king's messengers was a burning denunciation of idolatry, and prediction that the curses of the law should be fulfilled on the city and the people. For the sinful nation there was no hope. But to the king himself she sent a message of comfort because his heart was tender, and he had mourned for the sins of the people. She promised him that he should not see the evil that was to come on the nation, that he should die in peace and be buried with his

The King's Best Gift to His People. King Josiah did the best thing for his people when he brought the book of the law to them. At his command they gathered together, elders, priests, Levites, and all the people in the courts of the temple, and he "read all the words of the book of the covenant to them." That was a great gathering, and the beginning of a better time for the nation. The king led the people, "great and small," in a promise to God that they would keep His law, and as long as he lived they did not depart from it. To Josiah and his people that new-found law was state constitution and prayer-book, all in one. was better for them than wealth or victory. For all future time this book held the respect and love of the Hebrew people, and helped to make them great and honored. Pious Israelites quoted chapters from it in their daily devotions, and our Lord was familiar with it.

It requires something more than olive orchards and vineyards and fields of wheat and flocks and herds and gold and silver to make a great nation. There must be moral and spiritual strength, and the Bible is the best book in the world to build

such strength. "Our country," said Walt Whitman, "is made up of prairies and muscle and Rocky Mountains." But the poet Sidney Lanier replied in a burst of fine indignation, "Mr. Whitman, you cannot make a republic of prairies and muscle and Rocky Mountains. Republics are made of spirit." The Bible is the book that ministers to a print and therefore it makes great nations. to spirit, and therefore it makes great nations.

The King's wise Policy for his People. King Josiah made a covenant before the Lord to keep his commandments with all his heart. In doing this he turned back not to the example of his fathers who had sinned, but to the older example of those great Hebrews who were faithful, such as Moses and Joshua and David and the good king The fact of a covenant with God is one of the greatest features of the history of that wonderful people. No other nation had any such thought about their gods, or any such relation with them.

To keep the agreement with God was wise because it was right, and when Josiah "caused the people to stand to it" he entered on a policy better by far than an alliance with Egypt or Babylon or any idol-worshipping nation. An alliance with the Lord was religiously right, but it was also politically safe. Oliver Cromwell felt that he also had a covenant with God. He was a man of prayer, and his soldiers were known as "the praying Iron-sides," and they were as mighty in battle as they

were earnest in prayer.

"I raised such men," said Cromwell, "as had
the fear of God before them, and had some conscience of what they did; and from that day forward I must say to you they were never beaten.

* * The issue of the whole war lay in that word. It lay with 'such men as had some conscience in what they did.'''

Quiz and Study. What great king was the pattern of great according to the words.

tern of goodness according to the writer of Chronicles? 2. Is it easy for a king to reform the religion of his people, or does it require long and earnest and brave effort? 3. Which was the more precious, the book or the money that Hilkiah found in the treasury? 4. Can there be a great and happy nation without true teachers and true teaching? 5. What is the greatest and best book in the world, and who are its teachers?

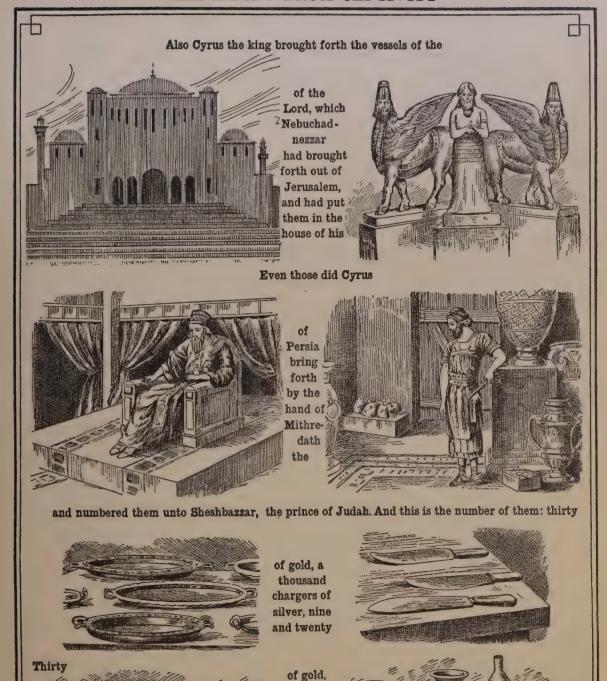
Practical Thoughts 1. The people of Judeb

Practical Thoughts. 1. The people of Judah would have been better off if they had not lost their Bible. Too many of us practically lose our Bibles by allowing them to become dust-covered; or we bury them under a pile of magazines and newspapers; or in the rush of business and professional life we forget them entirely. We need to keep our Bibles wide open, close to the very throne of our lives.

2. Like the open-hearted king of Judah, we should let the Bible right into our souls. A man who was reading the New Testament said to his wife, "Wife, if this book is true, I am a sinner." Later he said, "Wife, if this book is true I am lost." Reading still further he at last said, "Wife, if this book is true I may be saved."

3. The king had the book before his people. We may pray for and give to the misisonaries and the great Bible societies as they seek to give this book to India and China and Japan and Africa and the world. DEAN W. J. LHAMON.

RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY



a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

silver basons
of a second
sort four
hundred
and ten,
and other

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EZRA 1:7-11.

Prayer: Our Father, May we, as we study this part of Thy Word, appreciate deeply Thy great goodness in opening the way by which we may escape from the captivity of sin. May we look unto Thee as

our Deliverer. May none of us remain in captivity, but may we go forth in faith to return to our own country, to our home in our Father's house. In the name of Christ. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 536. Places, Babylon and Jerusalem. Persons, Cyrus, the chief fathers of Judah and Benjamin, Sheshbazzar prince of Judah, and Mithredath the treasurer of Cyrus.

Scripture Setting: A Study of Captivity. A useful captive, 2 Kings 5:2. Righteousness among captives, Dan. 2:25. Good news to captives, Jer. 29:20. Lamentations in captivity, Psa. 137. Prayer of captives, Psa. 126:1-4. Servants of sin, John 8:35. Ransomed of the Lord, Isa. 35:10;

51:11. Captives of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5. God and

captives, Deut. 30:3; Psa. 14:7; 53:6; 85:1.

Life and Conduct Setting: The position of the Jews in Babylon had been due to disobedience and sin. 1. The Lord accepted their repentance and offered them a new opportunity as a people. 2. The love of their country had been kept alive, and thus there remained a strong motive for their return. 3. Sin swept away their nationality, but had not destroyed the possibility of God's restoring it.

GOING BACK TO THE OLD HOME.

It was a joyous time for a people who had been long in captivity to another nation. Through how many days and weeks, months and years they had yearned for the beloved home-country. They had hung their harps on the willows and wept by the waters of Babylon because of enforced absence from their native land. Now God had compassion on them and the way was being opened for their return. How they smiled and laughed and wept for joy. It was too good to be true, but it was true. And men, women and children of the Jews rejoiced and talked and planned and thrilled with delightful expectation.

A Wonderful History. Their fathers had for ages rejoiced in the possession of the land given them of God. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived in it before the years of bondage in Egypt. Then had come the wonderful departure of the host of freed slaves. their journey through the Red Sea and the What a mighty conquest was wilderness. that when Israel, under the Divine leadership, had gone up against the hosts of the native heathen of Palestine. How wonderfully they had been enabled to wrest from them "the land flowing with milk and honey." Having overcome the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the beautiful, rich land became theirs.

What a glorious history had been theirs for many ages! There had risen their mighty prophets, their great kings. There they had prospered and grown great among the nations. There they had built cities and planted vineyards and cultivated orchards and fields. Their cattle and their sheep had covered the plains and the hills. Their chil-

dren had flourished in that happy land. David had risen and had subdued all enemies. Solomon had come in his glory and had built the Temple and adorned the city of Jerusalem. His fame had been known everywhere. Their prophets had spoken in the name of God and those splendid men had taught the people the Divine truth. It had been a glorious history. No men and women ever loved a country more deeply, more passionately than they had loved their own land.

Glory Changed to Shame. But a dread foreign foe had come, with vast armies, with irresistible weapons of war. The plains of Palestine had swarmed with the hosts of the Chaldeans. The battering rams of Nebuchadnezzar had pounded at the walls of Jerusalem. Their capital city had been taken. Their soldiers had been defeated. The fierce warriors of Babylon had driven the Jews, men, women and children, like sheep before them, away and away, over many miles, across rivers and plains, to be captives in the huge city of Babylon, a city whose very name had grown to be terrible in the ears of all other nations.

There in Babylon they were made to serve their masters. They had a certain amount of liberty; they were not prisoners in dungeons; they were not bound in iron. Some of them even succeeded in business and became rich in that land. They lived in a very great city and in a very fertile and rich country. But it was not their country. The Babylonians were not their people. The Jews were aliens among foreigners. They were looked upon and treated as inferiors, even when they were not actual slaves.

What a contrast to the ancient glory of

Jerusalem. Now its walls were in ruins. The temple was desolate. The fields were uncultivated. So the Jews were sad. When the native Babylonians bade them sing their old songs of Zion and play upon their harps, they hung the musical instruments on the sad willows and wept, saying, "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land." So they wept for their home. Each generation of children that grew up during that long captivity heard of all that had occurred. They were told of the ancient glory of their own people. They heard how their fathers had been carried away from a beautiful, rich country of their own. They were not permitted to forget, for all hoped that some day there would be a return.

New Masters. Now after Nebuchadnezzar died, others succeeded him. Then another nation came into power. Media and Persia started upon their conquests. Babylon was taken by Darius the Mede, and after a while Cyrus, the king of the Persians, extended his power almost everywhere. Then there was shown to this mighty monarch, Cyrus, a prophecy of the Jews which foretold that Cyrus would be the deliverer of the Jews and would send them back safely to their own country. Cyrus was deeply impressed by this mention of his own name in a writing of one of the prophets of the Lord. He declared he would carry out that design: give the Jews the privilege of going back to their own country and help them to accomplish that end.

Cyrus issued a royal decree to that effect. He declared that the Lord had given him all the kingdoms of the earth and had appointed him to build God an house at Jerusalem. He called upon any of the Jews who wished to do so to go up to Jerusalem and declared that God would be with such. He commanded that those who would not go should help those who returned, with silver and gold, with goods and beasts, as freewill offerings for the house of God, to be rebuilt at Jerusalem.

Good News. Gladly at that glorious announcement did many of the Jews make ready for departure. The chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites rose up for this journey. All those around them gave of their wealth willingly. Cyrus also commanded that the precious and holy vessels that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from the temple, and which had been placed in the heathen temples in Babylon, should now be brought forth and given to the Jews to take

back, to fit up the new temple when it should be erected. The treasurer of king Cyrus, named Mithredath, brought all these forth, about five thousand four hundred vessels of gold and silver, and gave them to Sheshbazzar, who was a prince of Judah.

So under the protection of the decree of Cyrus, with many gifts in their hands and with the vessels of the Lord's house restored to them, a host of the Jews set forth. There were more than forty-two thousands of the Jews, besides more than seven thousand servants and maids, and two hundred singing men and women. They had many horses and mules and camels and asses. They set off on that happy, longed-for journey of return to that beloved country from which their fathers had been carried many years before.

Doubtless there were many hardships on the way. It was a long journey; they had to endure many discomforts, but they were so overjoyed by the fact that they were actually on the road to their own country, they did not mind them. On and on they went, day after day, mile after mile. At last they drew near to the borders of that country which had been that of their race. With what eager eyes they caught their first glimpses of it. What joy welled up in their hearts at the prospect. Soon their feet touched their own soil. They were back again, returned from the dreadful captivity. They were a free people once more, in possession of their own land.

Have you ever owned homing pigeons? If so, or if you have watched the flights of such as have belonged to others, you know that when a pigeon of this species is carried far away and is then released he rises rapidly high in the air, circles around for a while, and then speeds straight toward his native cote. So should we turn from the captivity of sin and flee to our Heavenly Father for peace and liberty.

Practical Truths. 1. Sin, like Babylon, is a state of captivity. It is worse, indeed, than any bodily slavery. 2. God's gracious, loving purpose is to deliver those who are in bondage to evil. 3. Christ brings to us the only real freedom. All else is bondage. The Christian is the only truly free person. 4. As Cyrus permitted the Jews to go back and take possession once more of their own country, so God welcomes us from our sins into His favor and love. 5. The history tells us that some of the Jews did not return to Palestine, but continued in Babylon permanently. They were in love with it and were satisfied. It is pathetic to think of such men, from whose hearts the love of country had died out. But even that is a small thing beside the sinner who refuses to go back to his Father's House. 6. It is a very important truth that the Jews were made better by their captivity. They had been influenced by the idolatrous nations before they were carried away. The prophets had warned constantly against these demoralizing tendencies. But after their long experiences in a heathen land, and the bitterness they had passed through, there is evidence that the Jews never again departed from the worship of God. Much of the dross had been burned out of them in the furnace of captivity.

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

And when the builders



of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel



and the Levites the sons of Asaph with



to praise
the Lord
after
the
ordinance
of David
king of
Israel.
And
they



together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people

the found ation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the

with a great shout, when they praised the Lord,



priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were

that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EZRA 3:8 to 4:3.

Prayer: Our Father, We thank Thee that it is given to us also to have our share in the rebuilding of Thy kingdom wherever it has suffered from the power of evil. Help us to give ourselves with great joy and earnestness to this holy work. When we have come to the close of our earthly lives, may we have, by Thy grace, accomplished something toward this glorious end. In the name of Christ,

"'Nor heeds the sceptic's puny hands,
While near the school the church-spire stands;
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule
While near the church-spire stands the school."

—Whittier.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 536 to 516. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Jeshua, Zerubbabel, priests, Levites, Jewish people, Cyrus, Tatnai the governor, the Cutheans, Darius the son of Hystaspes

Scripture Setting: Temple Worship. Toward the temple, Psa. 5:7. Enquiring in temple, Psa. 27:4. Thoughts in the temple, Psa. 48:9. Defiling of, Psa. 79:1. Voice of God in, Isa. 66:6. Temple without God, Hosea, 8:14. The Lord present in, Hab. 2:20. Jesus in the temple, Matt. 21:12-13.

Jesus in the temple, Matt. 21:12-13.

Life and Conduct Setting: The remarkable aspects of this rebuilding of the temple are that a

foreign king, Cyrus, took a deep interest in it; the restoration of the sacred vessels that had been plundered from the former temple, the long journey of the returning Jews largely for the purpose of rebuilding the sacred edifice, and the removal of great and numerous difficulties that were in the way. 1. The help of God to this end was evident throughout. 2. The people, under Divine guidance, wrought willingly and persistently. 3. The foes of the movement were defeated in their plottings. 4. The whole history shows how believers are aided in their work.

BUILDING THE SECOND TEMPLE.

The idea of building and rebuilding is most attractive. It applies to character and life, to society and institutions as well as to material edifices. The young person has his life and character to build. He is to take part also in the laying of foundations and the rearing of walls in the institutions around him. Not only that, but he is to have a share in the rebuilding of whatever good or useful organizations have decayed or have been impaired from any cause. It is a rare opportunity and should awaken enthusiasm in every youthful heart.

The First Temple. Now we are to consider the rebuilding of the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem. That temple had been one of the most glorious structures ever erected on the earth. It had long been planned and prepared for. While David was king he had collected gold and silver, iron and wood for this purpose. When Solomon came to the throne the actual work was begun and carried forward. Experts had been secured from neighboring kingdoms, the best architects, the most skilful workers in metals, wood and stone. At last the splendid temple stood completed on Mount Zion. It was dedicated with elaborate ceremonies in the presence of vast multitudes. For many years it was the center of worship for the children of Israel. Then came foreign invaders, who

captured the city and destroyed the temple.

Hindrances. There are always foes, material or spiritual, ready at hand to overthrow the best that good men can establish.

Even the temple of Jehovah was not secure from these. Neither is anything else. Good character, noble reputation, useful influence,

the best institutions, all have foes. We must ever be on our guard to defend the good against the evil.

At last, the longings of Israel for the restoration of the temple are to have the beginnings of their fulfillment. Like other good works, however, this is to have its hindrances and delays. Nothing goes forward in this world without encountering difficulties. We must expect the difficulties and be ready to meet them, and persevere in spite of them. Cyrus had been deeply impressed by the prophecy which foretold that he should send back the Israelites to their own land and that he should build a house to the true God. Many of the Jews had gone back. He had restored to them the holy vessels of the temple which had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and called upon the people to supply them with gold and silver.

There was a king who was very ambitious that his son should become a leader of men, and in order to impress upon him the possibilities that were in him, he used frequently to stand by him and lay his hands on the youth's head and say with deep feeling, "You can. You can. You can." This experience so influenced the young man to effort that he led an energetic life and made a profound impression upon his age. What every young person needs is to be impressed with this thought, "I can do something for God. I can help in the rebuilding of His kingdom. I can. I can."

So, in the seventh month, the people of Israel gathered in Jerusalem. The city presented a great contrast to what it had once been. Now the walls were cast down, and the temple was a pile of rubbish. But the people were thankful for their return, for permission from Cyrus to restore what had

been thrown down, and thankful for means by which to do this work. So, in spite of all,

it was a joyous occasion.

Worship First. Everything has to have a beginning; usually a small one. A great deal was to be done and it would take a long time, but the people were ready to begin in an humble way. Though it would be years before the temple could be finished, they could speedily have an altar. The altar, under the Jewish dispensation, was really the center of their worship. It was the place where the sacrifices were made, and the offerings of animals to be slain stood for the giving by the people of themselves to God. Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel and his brethren builded the altar. Among the rubbish they found parts of the ancient altar. With reverent hands they cleared a space, and set up the parts as nearly as possible like what they had been before. Again a sacrifice was laid thereon and again the smoke ascended. The people reverently entered into the spirit of the hour, pledging themselves as a spiritual offering unto God.

This being the time of the Feast of Tabernacles and a great multitude present, they celebrated that event. It was a memorial of the days when their ancestors dwelt in tents. They were accustomed to erect booths made from branches of trees and to live in these during the feast days. Thus they commemorated one of their great annual feasts, and with the daily offerings laid on the altar they began to restore their ancient customs. At once also masons and carpenters were employed and arrangements were made with men of Tyre and Zidon to bring cedar trees from Lebanon for the work when it should

begin.

Once two men were passing along a street of a large city when they came to a spot where a huge but old building was being torn down. The air was filled with dust; the sound of falling stones and timbers rose above the noise of traffic. one man said, "How distressing it is to see so much waste. Think of the labor that went into the first erection of all that. Now it is but rubbish."
"You are wrong," said the other. "It is glorious. You should think of what is to take its place. Nothing is grander than the rebuilding of something better, larger, finer, more useful." This is true. A large part of our work in life is this very rebuilding; putting up what has been taken down.

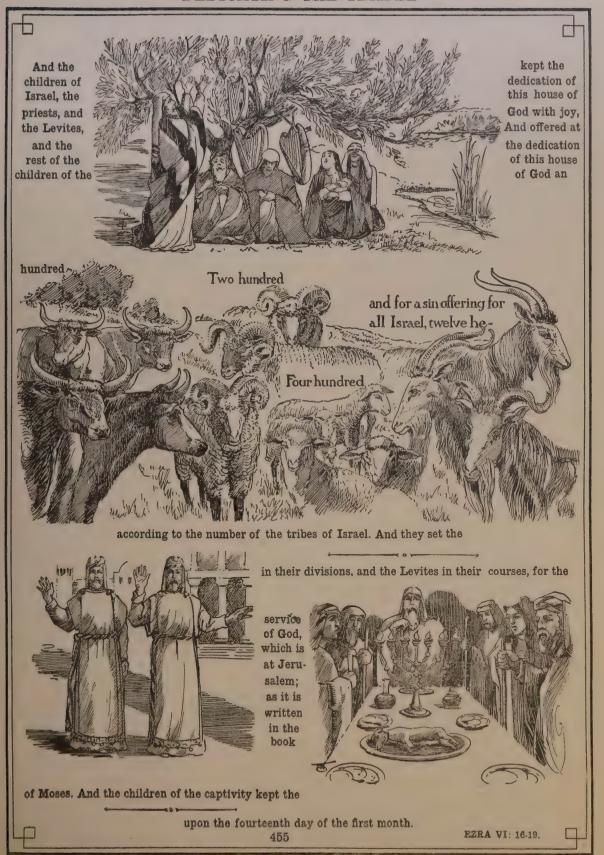
Beginning to Build. It was not until the second month of the second year that the foundations of the temple were ready. Then the leaders and the priests gathered, with

priests, in their robes and with trumpets in their hands, and the procession of the Levites and singers with their cymbals broke forth in praise to God. They sang by courses in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, "because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever toward Israel." All the people shouted. Among those present were some aged men who remembered the first temple, and now they were stirred to tears of mingled sadness and joy.

Delayed. It seemed that all would be well and that the great work would advance steadily. But enemies interfered. It appears that long before this an Assyrian king named Shalmanezer had conquered Samaria, and after a custom of those days had transplanted many people from Persia and Media as colonists, and these were known as the Cutheans. These and other neighboring people did not wish the Jews to come back to their own land nor to rebuild their cities. So they bribed certain of the officers of Cyrus to delay the work. Cyrus himself was busy with his wars and knew nothing of all this. Year after year the Jews were interfered with and made little progress. The Cutheans sent letters to several kings, succeeded each other, accusing the Jews of being a rebellious people, and so the work was hindered. Artaxerxes, having received such a letter, sent in haste to Jerusalem and compelled the cessation of the work of building. When the next Darius, who was the son of Hystaspes, came to the throne, Zerubbabel and Jeshua ventured to begin again. The Assyrian governor to the west of the Euphrates heard of this, and bade them give their authority for what they were doing. Yet they persevered. Then the governor sent a letter to Darius stating that the Jews had answered him that they had authority from Cyrus to rebuild their temple and city. Darius upon this had search made among the records of his kingdom and found the decree of Cyrus. He then issued his own decree, granting permission to the Jews to go forward with their work.

Completed. Great was the joy in all hearts when at last this news came to them. The governor sent word speedily that Darius was favorable to their enterprise and that no man dared interfere more with them. Now they set to work in earnest and went on without interruption, until the walls had risen and the structure was crowned with its roof and all its appropriate fittings.

Practical Truths, 1. A religious enterprise, conducted in the right spirit, may be assured of God's supervision, leadership and help. 2. Out of the most distressing conditions, it is always possible to reëstablish what is good. 3. Seasons of spiritual indifference are always followed, in due time, by revived interest and progress. 4. Every one of us, in our degree and place, can have part in rebuilding the broken places. 5. The demands on our time for work for God are as great and pressing as when the Jews rebuilt their temple. To the superficial observer, all may seem to be moving onward satisfactorily. But there is much to be done, and every worker is needed. Let us do our part. 6. "The family altar should be set up first the leaders and the priests gathered, with
the people. The great stones were in place.
So much had been accomplished. Now the important than the house in which it is offered."



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EZRA 6:16-22.

Prayer: Our Father, May we be interested always in Thy work, and give Thee our hearts while we worship in the temples dedicated to Thy holy Teach us reverence for Thy house, and may Thy house ever be to us a place in which we draw nearer to Thee. In Christ's name. Amen.

I love Thy church, O God: Her walls before Thee stand. Dear as the apple of Thine eye, And graven on Thy hand.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 516. Place, Jeru-

salem. Persons, priests, Levites and people.
Scripture Setting: Study of Spiritual Bearings of the Temple. Witness against sin from the temple, Micah 1:2. Temples without God, Hosea, 8:14. The lame in, Matt. 21:14. Buying and selling in, Mark 11:15. Pharisee and publican in, Luke 18:10. Gate of, Acts 3:10. Swearing by, Matt. 23:16. God present everywhere, Acts 7:48. Man a temple, 1 Cor. 6:19, Spiritual temple, Ephes. 2:21. A pillar in, Rev. 3:12. No temple in Heaven, Rev. 21:22. God and Christ the Temple, Rev. 21:22. Life and Conduct Setting: This dedication of

the temple was characterized by the joy and enthusiasm of the leaders and of the people, by a feast of rejoicing, by the reëstablishment of their religious ceremonies, by the consecration of priests and people anew to God, by the welcome given to such as had fallen into heathen ways, but repented and returned. 1. The temple became dearer to them than before. 2. It became the realized cen-ter of national and spiritual life. 3. The welcome to such as had fallen into sin became from that time onward a more marked feature of Jewish religious life. 4. So restored blessings may become dearer to us, after our experience of their loss.

A NEW CHURCH HOME SET APART TO GOD.

It is a beautiful act to dedicate, to set apart for God, or for any holy or good uses, a person, a building, or a portion of time. It has served many a noble purpose in the world so to do. All of us who do what we should do, dedicate ourselves to God. We can say, "This body shall be used only for good; this mind shall be consecrated to good; my time and talents and opportunities shall all be used for the best purposes."

Set Apart. Certain buildings are set apart for educational ends, some for art, some for business, some for homes, and then they are supposed to be used only for such ends. Sometimes elaborate ceremonies are employed in connection with the completion of art buildings, or great public structures. But especially are the churches set apart with religious ceremonies for the worship of God. And in this custom we follow the precedent of the ancient Jews who, with all the impressiveness of their ceremonies, proclaimed that the temple was given to God. The word itself is from a Latin one which means "to give." The dedication of the temple was the giving of it to God, for His worship.

The ceremonies with which this was done were used as an expression of the hearts and minds of the givers. In themselves they had no intrinsic worth; ceremonies do not change a material fact, a building, nor the character of a person. But they may be a very beautiful and valuable expression of the feeling of men and women and children. Ceremonies are nothing if used without sincere feeling and thought, but when full of affection and spirit they may be, and often are, of great beauty and helpfulness. When the temple was thus dedicated it became a holy place to the people who built it for God. While to us an altar with a slain animal upon it, being consumed by fire, would mean little, to the ancient Jews it was a devout and reverent expression of gratitude to the Divine Being.

A Happy Occasion. The Feast of Dedication was kept with joy. It was twenty-one years since they began to rebuild the temple. That seemed to them a long time, since they had wrought under such very great difficulties. True, this temple was not so vast and splendid as that of Solomon, but it was the best they could erect since they were a small and still scattered people. It was a center of national and religious life and they were glad. They consecrated it not with a fast but with a feast. There are some sad things in their circumstances, but these they would forget, and they would rejoice in what they had. They would not spend the days comparing this temple with that of Solomon and lamenting over their calamities, but they would praise God for the good they enjoyed.

"On his humble shoemaker's bench, Carey laid the foundation of British Baptist Missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was glowing with love to Christ; he took him to see John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, whose piety and whose beneficence increase together. They and whose beneficence increase together. educated him, and that boy became Claudius Buchana, whose name India will bless when Clive and Hastings are forgotten. John Bunyan was a gift of poverty to the church. Zwingle came from an Alpine shepherd's cabin; Luther from a miner's cottage; some of the apostles from fishermen's huts." Such are some of the gifts which poverty has dedicated to the service of Christ and the church.

Their worship was again according to their ancient customs. The regular order of priests was present. The Jews have always kept their genealogies with the greatest care. and they do so today. While they were in captivity in Babylon they preserved as much as possible of an orderly worship and of their national organization. So when they returned to their own land the succession of the priesthood was maintained. The offerings at this dedication were small compared to the days of Solomon, yet they were generous for this people at the time. Seven hundred victims were presented as a burnt offering. Twelve goats were sacrificed as a sin offering "for all Israel," one for each tribe.

With processions of priests, with trumpets and psalms, with prayers and shouts and sacrifices, the new temple was set apart for

the worship of Jehovah.

The Passover Kept. Then on the fourteenth day of the month, the Passover was kept in celebration of the deliverance from Egypt. For seven days more they continued

in their rejoicings, praising God.

By this dedication and by following it with the Passover, Israel again appropriately showed herself as the redeemed and favored people of the Lord. They felt themselves to be in covenant relation with Jehovah. At the same time they were beginning a new and glorious assurance of continuance and progress.

"The word 'temple' has as its root 'tem,' which signifies 'cut.' Templum means a portion 'cut off.' Its religious associations came in this manner: The Roman augurs, when they wished to observe the heavens, went forth with a sacred rod in their hands, and marked out with it a portion of the sky. Whatever passed within that portion was the subject of their augury, and no more. This was the 'templum,' the separated space, cut out of the blue heavens for sacred uses. Thus the word came to be applied to any enclosed spot which might be separated to sacred uses; to sanctuaries and houses of prayer. The fundamental idea is separation, the severing of a portion of the material universe for higher use and honor than the residue.'' So we can separate a portion of time, or a certain amount of money, or whatever we have of value, to give to God. When we enter God's house, we should realize that it is separated, "cut off" and

devoted to spiritual things.

In preparation for this dedication, we are told that the priests and Levites purified themselves as one man, and they were all clean. This refers partly to the ceremonial cleansings, washing with water and the putting on of pure garments. But it also indicates that the men gave themselves anew in consecration of heart and life to God.

There was a noble readiness, a holy zeal on their part. We likewise should follow in their steps in this regard. Helping to build the church, joining in its worship, is not enough, but we should pray that our hearts and lives be cleansed from all iniquity.

An incident is related of a missionary and a proud and powerful Indian chief. The chief was convicted of sin. Trembling under a sense of guilt, he approached the missionary and proffered his belt of wampum, to be freed from his crushing fears. "No," said the missionary, "Christ cannot accept such a sacrifice." The Indian departed, but soon returned, offering his rifle and the skins he had taken in hunting. "No," was the reply, "Christ cannot accept such a sacrifice." Again the Indian went away, but soon returned once more with a troubled conscience and offered his wigwam, wife, child; everything for peace and pardon. "No," was still the reply, "Christ cannot accept such a sacrifice." The chief seemed oppressed with surprise for a moment; then lifting up his tearful eyes to the face of the missionary, he cried out, "Here, Lord, take poor Indian, too."

The Lost One Welcomed. Another feature of this celebration was that such others as were willing to unite with them and purify themselves from heathen customs round were welcomed to the dedication and the feast. "And all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land came." These were descendants of the Jews and Israelites who had remained in the land when the rest of the nation had been carried into captivity. These had intermarried with the heathen. Now they were welcomed if they would forsake communion with these people and seek communion with the Jewish congregation. It was one of the gracious opportunities of the restored Jews. as it is of every Christian church, to gather unto itself from the sinners around them such as were willing to follow the Lord.

In all this wonderful story of the return of Israel, the rebuilding and dedication of the temple of God, it is plain that God was actively present. He used men and nations for His purposes, but it was His work. Cyrus and the others were but instruments of God in carrying out His plans and purposes.

Practical Truths. We should be careful to revere the very edifices erected to God. While they are built of earthly materials, they are made sacred by being set apart to God. 2. The worship of God is the highest use of our best faculties. We should bring to the temple attentive minds, sincere hearts and pure lips. We should strive to find help for our souls in public worship and beware of mere formalism. 3. Remember we are to dedicate not only temples, but ourselves, our talents, our time, all to God. 4. We should form a habit of regular giving to the church and to all the work of God. 5. We all may have a part in hastening the building of the temple of God's kingdom in the earth.

DR. C. D. WILSON.

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the



of Ahava,
that we might
afflict ourselves
before our God,
to seek of him
a right wayfor
us, and for our



and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of



to
help us
against
the
enemy
in the
way:
because
we had
spoken
unto the



saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but, his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.* * Then we



of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem. and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as



the way And we



and abode there three days.

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EZRA VIII · 21-22, 31-32

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EZRA 8:15-32.

Prayer: Our Father, May we, like Thy servant Ezra, be helpers in Thy work. Help Thou us that we may help others. Make us able to be leaders if this be Thy will in regard to us; if this be not best, make us wise as followers. In the name of Christ. Amen.

"One soul in panoply of Heaven Is stronger than their host: The cause which God befriends cannot Outnumbered be or lost."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS BELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 458. Place, Babylon, the lands between the Euphrates and Syria, and Jerusalem: Persons, Ezra, Artaxerxes, priests and followers.

priests and followers.

Scripture Setting: A Study in Journeys. The king's decree, Ezra 7:11-26. The journey of the children of Israel, Exodus 13:20. Of Abraham from Ur, Gen. 11:31—12:1-8. Of Jacob and sons into Egypt, Gen. 46:1-34. Of Jesus, John 4:6. Of disciples, Matt. 10. Paul's journey to Damascus, Acts 9:3. Paul's missionary journeys, Acts. Of the master in the parable, Mark 13:34.

Life and Conduct Setting: This was the expedition of an earnest religious reformer, who desired to turn his people from evil and destructive ways unto righteousness. 1. He had a commission from God to this end. 2. His manner of life and training had prepared him for this work. 3. He had won the esteem and confidence of the king, and so was able to carry on his mission with royal support and influence. 4. We should, in our degree, aim to be reformers of whatever is wrong around us.

PREPARING FOR A LONG. PERILOUS JOURNEY.

When a leader is needed for the affairs of God's kingdom, God always brings forward the fitting person. There is always demand for laborers in the field of God's work, and He can and will use us if we lend ourselves willingly to His purposes. But in the great crises; in the most trying times, men and women of remarkable gifts are required, and God equips and commissions them for the It appears that many years had passed since the large company of Jews had returned to their country from Babylon and had rebuilt the temple. Meanwhile many others had remained in Assyria; some of these were engaged in prosperous business enterprises and so were anchored in a foreign land. Perhaps some of them felt that by remaining where they were and by in-creasing wealth they could best help those of their countrymen who went back to the Holy Land. Others were priests and officers of the Jews and were needed by those who remained in Babylon as spiritual advisers and leaders.

A True Patriot. Among those still in Babylon was Ezra, whose name means "the helper," and he indeed proved to be a help to his people. He is declared to have been "a ready scribe in the law of Moses," a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord and of His statutes to Israel, "a scribe of the law of the God of heaven," a priest. "He was a man of Judah and was descended from Hilkiah the high priest in Josiah's reign. He was qualified for the work which he undertook, since "he had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." He was, in short, a learned and pious priest.

Some years before Lincoln was elected President he declared that it would require a very great man to lead the nation through the crisis which he saw approaching. When he had become President, the man to whom he had made this remark wrote reminding him of it and asking if he thought he was such a great man. He replied, "I am not such a man, but I have faith that God can make me to be such a man." We may not in ourselves be equal to the duties that come to us. but we are not to undertake them in our own strength. With God's help we become better, and indeed greater.

He had learned that the Jews in Palestine had fallen from the good ways in which they had begun, and his motive in making his journey was to bring about a religious reformation. It is wonderful how easily individuals and large bodies of people can slip back and down from right paths. There is a constant struggle between good and evil and society and individuals require always to be on their guard. Moreover, reformers, leaders with earnest convictions and pure lives and influence, are needed to stir the conscience and awaken people to their duty. Ezra felt called of God to set forth to revive religion and righteousness at Jerusalem.

The King's Favor. A new king had come to rule in Babylon, by name Artaxerxes Longimanus. We do not know how Ezra had grown in favor with that monarch, whether by some remarkable act, or on account of his learning and character, or on account of special influence with his own people, such as the king approved. We do know, however, that Ezra did stand exceedingly high in the opinion of Artaxerxes, and that the king granted his request to be permitted to return to his country and he issued a special letter to that effect. In it the king said, "I make a decree that all they of

the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee." Ezra was authorized "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem," to carry the silver and gold which the king was sending as an offering to God, also the free will offerings of the people. The king showed his remarkable faith in Ezra by writing, "And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God. bestow it out of the king's treasure house." He ordered that all his treasurers westward of the Euphrates should do speedily whatever Ezra required of them "unto a hundred talents of silver, and to a hundred measures of wheat, and to a hundred baths of wine. and to a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much." What confidence this heathen king had in his captive servant! The priests, singers and all who were to minister in the house of God were to be free of toil, tribute or custom. Ezra was also commissioned to appoint the judges and magistrates in the regions west of the Euphrates. He was authorized to execute judgment upon any who would not obey the law of God and of the king, even to death, banishment, confiscation of goods or imprisonment.

Napoleon said of the saying, "Man proposes, but God disposes," when it was quoted to him, "I propose and dispose also." But God overruled him and he was sent an exile to St. Helena. Ezra was wiser, and strove to see what the plan of God might be, and followed that. In our efforts to do good we should be wise and seek to learn God's plan and keep close to it.

Joining the Caravan. Thus commissioned and equipped Ezra read the king's letter to the Jews in Babylon, retaining the Epistle itself as too necessary to allow others to have. He made copies of the same and sent to all the Jews in that region. His countrymen were much pleased with the king's letter and many of those from outside Babylon came up to that city to join him in his journey. Altogether, there were gathered about Ezra, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, seventeen hundred and fiftyfour people, including priests, Levites, singers, porters and servants. This does not seem a large number, but we are to remember that it is not as simple a matter as it appears for people to leave their business, the homes they have made and to take wives and children, who may suffer from a long

when their hearts yearn for the home land. Doubtless, multitudes of Jews were much interested in Ezra's expedition, who found it would be too much of a hardship for them to join him.

The Journey. The journey itself occupied four months. On the west side of the Euphrates they gathered together, and stayed there three days, to fast and to pray for God's presence and care; for preservation from enemies and accidents. Ezra had been offered an escort of the horsemen of the king, but he told Artaxerxes that God would care for them and so declined the aid of soldiers. He knew well that God's protection was more important than any help men could give. He trusted utterly in the Divine power, and his course was justified.

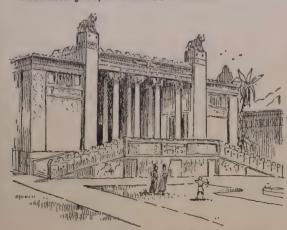
The End. Now on and on, over that wide region between them and their sought-for destination the caravan moves day by day. When they encountered officers and agents of the king the letter Ezra bore, with the seal of Artaxerxes, gave them right of way. God uses the kings of the earth for His purposes, as well as the lowliest instruments. Here was a small company of captive Jews marching, unprotected by soldiery, through a strange country infested with robbers, but God was over them and kept them safe, and even the seal of a heathen king was made to aid them. So after four months of wearisome journey they came in sight of the city that had been the pride and joy of their fathers. How their hearts must have thrilled and the hardships of the journey faded from memory as they looked upon the city of which in captivity they had said, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." But they found many things to make their hearts sad in Zion-neglect and abuses that required time and tears to correct.

Practical Truths. 1. We should set out in faith upon the missions on which God sends us. 2. God can make even alien and hostile powers friendly to us, and cause them to serve good ends. 3. We should meet the critical times in the spirit of prayer. 4. As the Jews longed for Jerusalem, so Christians should desire the Kingdom of God to be established in the whole world. 5. Like Ezra, we are called upon to be loyal to the Word of God, whether in Babylon or in Jerusalem. whether in Babylon or in Jerusaiem. Jerusaie counts everywhere and with all men. 7. Under the most adverse conditions we may be fitted for journey, and go to a far-away place even I the service of God, as Ezra was when in captivity.

DR. C. D. WILSON.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the



That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain



of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the



and concerning
Jerusalem.
And they said
unto me, The
remnant that
are left of the
captivity there
in the province
are in great
affliction and
reproach:
the wall of
Jerusalem
also is



and the gates thereof are



with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS NEHEMIAH 1:1-11.

Prayer: Our Father, Teach us to pray in the true faith that Thou dost hear and answer. May we come to Thee with those real needs of our hearts that are truly felt. May we see the answers to our petitions in Thy providential removal of difficulties and the giving of the means whereby the ends may be accomplished. In the name of Christ, Amen.

"And still what miracles of grace are wrought
In many a lowly chamber with shut door,
Where God our Father is in secret sought
And shows Himself in mercy more and more!
Dim upper rooms with God's own glory shine,
And souls are lifted to the life Divine."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 445-444. Place, Susa or Shushan ("a lily"), the chief of the three capitals of the Persiau empire. Persons, Nehemiah and Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Scripture Setting: A Study of Prayer. Importunate prayer, Isa. 62:6-7. Prayer of waiting, Isa. 26:8. Sincere prayer, Psa. 66:18. Daniel's prayer, Daniel 9. Penitent prayer, Lev. 26:33, 42; Deut. 4:29-31. Prayer and kings, Prov. 21:1. Command to pray, Luke 21:6. Without ceasing, I. Thess. 5:17.

Life and Conduct Setting: If we become suc-

cessful, we should not forget to help the poor among our acquaintances and relatives. We should consider the needs of all good people as if they were our own.

The greatest concern of all Christians should be for the Kingdom of God. Though we may gain high position and prosperity, our chief thought should still be for the glory of God. The coming of that Kingdom is what gives value to life and security to all the institutions in the world. Every good life, devoted to what is right and true, helps to bring in the Kingdom.

THE KIND OF PRAYER GOD HEARS.

One time prayer had very much to do with the building of the walls of a city. That may sound like a strange statement, but in a true sense the one depended upon the other. Our world is both spiritual and material, just as we have spirits and bodies. What the body does depends upon the spirit, and to a very large extent what happens in our world depends upon the spirit in man. Everything is under the control of God, who is a Spirit. Prayer has to do with the spirit, and prayer is uttered unto the Supreme Spirit. So what Nehemiah desired to do in regard to the walls of Jerusalem was first a wish in his own heart, was then expressed to God, and when he was assured that God would help him he went on to use the means God had given him. Prayer was thus the starting point and the inspiration of it all. We cannot believe too much in prayer. It works wonders and puts us into sympathy with the plans of God.

We are told by science that everything in the world is effected by causes. All is like the links of a chain, each one interlinked with another. It is entirely reasonable to believe that prayer, the devout human desire expressed to God, is itself one of the series of causes, a link in the chain.

The King's Cup-Bearer. It was some seventeen or eighteen years before that affairs in Jerusalem had appeared to be in a relatively prosperous condition. Ezra had gone thither and had stirred the people to reforms. But this progress had been interrupted. News of the present sad state of things came to Nehemiah. He was one of the captive Jews who remained far away from the land of his fathers. He was the cup-bearer of the king Artaxerxes at Susa, which was the

principal Persian palace. Echatana was the royal summer residence, Babylon the spring, Persepolis the autumn and Susa or Shushan the winter residence. The position of cupbearer was an important and responsible one. When kings were always in danger of being poisoned they needed near them men devoted to them personally and such as could be absolutely relied upon. The cup-bearer had as part of his business to watch carefully that no poisons were introduced into the king's drink. It speaks well for the character of Nehemiah that the king relied upon him to protect his life. A man in such a position was almost constantly near the person of the king, and if he were of an attractive nature the monarch would naturally treat him with some familiarity and friendship.

Bad News. Josephus gives us a more intimate glimpse of the way in which Nehemiah learned of the state of things at Jerusalem than we get elsewhere. He tells that Nehemiah was walking before the palace and heard some strangers that were entering the city, their garments showing that they had come from a long journey, speaking to one another in the Hebrew language. Nehemiah, knowing by their tongue that they were Jews, went to them and asked from whence they came. They told him they came from Judea. He began to inquire in what condition Jerusalem and the people there were. They answered that they were in a bad state, that the neighboring people had thrown down the walls. In the daytime they overran the country and plundered it, and at night they did mischief, sometimes carrying Jews away as captives. They said the roads were full of dead men. These reports caused

Nehemiah to shed tears, and he cried to God

to pity his countrymen.

He was so touched by this knowledge of the suffering Jews that he lost his cheerful appearance and often went about weeping. Once, as he was lamenting at the gate of the palace, a servant came to find him, saying the king was about to sit down to supper. He made haste and did not delay even to wash himself, and he went in to minister to the king in his office as cup-bearer. The king after supper was in a more cheerful mood than usual and looked on Nehemiah and asked him why he was sad.

The King Appealed To. Nehemiah, seeing that this was an opportunity to influence Artaxerxes in favor of his people, lifted up his heart to God and asked that He might give him persuasive words. He then said, "How can I, O king, appear otherwise than thus, and not be in trouble, while I hear that the walls of Jerusalem, the city where are the sepulchres of my fathers, are thrown down to the ground, and that its gates are consumed by fire? But do thou grant me the favor to go and build its walls."

Artaxerxes was moved by his appeal and promised that he would give him this permission, send him with a letter to his governors and aid him in every way. "Leave off thy sorrow then," said the king, "and be cheerful in the performance of thy office hereafter." Nehemiah thanked God in his heart, and thanked the king for his promise.

A boy heard his father pray that the needs of the poor might be supplied. He thought a while, and then said, "Father, I wish I had all the corn you have." "Why, son, what would you do with it?" "I would answer your prayer," said the boy. God expects us to use the means we have to answer our own prayers, so far as we can. He put it into the heart of Artaxerxes to help Nehemiah, and then Nehemiah was expected to carry

on the enterprise.

An Earnest Prayer. When Nehemiah had gotten the sad news from the travellers, he began to fast and pray. He prayed "day and night." He was importunate. There was no question but that he wanted what he prayed for more than anything else in the world. This is the only prayer that avails. It is but mockery to go through forms of prayer without any deep desire for what the words express. Prayer must be the earnest expression of needs that are deeply felt.

His prayer was one of profound religious patriotism. It had in it noble unselfishness. He interceded for Israel, the people of God, the people who had suffered much and long and were now scattered, while the few at Jerusalem were enduring all manner of

trials. He confessed before God national and individual sins. He magnified God as both just and merciful. He knew that wrongdoing was the source of these calamities, but he asked for pardon and mercy. He appealed to God as merciful, as willing to

pardon the penitent.

He declared the repentance of his people; they had been justly punished, but now they were willing to turn and keep the commandments. He asked God to remember that they were His people, redeemed by His hand. In continuing his prayers day and night he had two thoughts in mind—the greatness of God and the sinfulness of God's chosen people. God was able to help, and the people who had sinned were penitent. Therefore would not God be merciful and restore them to their land? Had not God promised mercy?

God's Answer. God answered his prayers. Prayer is always answered in some way and at some time. These devout and continued petitions of Nehemiah found their answer in the effect God's Spirit produced upon the heart of the king. Nehemiah asked for a special thing: mercy and restoration for the Jews. For the restoration, means were necessary. The king could be the instrument of Providence, if he would. His heart was turned in compassion upon Nehemiah and upon the Jews.

Letters were given him by the king, bidding the governors of the provinces he would pass through, convey him in safety. An epistle was given him to the keeper of the king's forest, commanding him to supply timbers for the work. So all was arranged; the way was made smooth; the prayer was

granted.

There is a picture in the Kensington Museum, England, of the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson waiting in the anteroom of a lord for audience with the nobleman. But God never keeps us waiting. We can enter His presence with our petitions at

any time and in any place.

Practical Truths. 1. This history shows how a great movement can originate in one person. 2. The genuine patriot is the religious patriot, one who knows that the true advancement of his country is through obedience to God. 3. Nehemiah undertook and carried on his work in spite of the indifference and apathy of thousands of his countrymen. There were doubtless millions of Jews scattered throughout the realm of Artaxerxes. Only comparatively few returned or took an interest therein. The indifference of those who should be interested is one of the greatest trials of religious workers. But no Christian should be affected by that. He should go on praying and working. 4. Good works usually fall upon the shoulders of a few. We should be content to be of the few. 5. Prayer brings down the blessing and prepares us to receive it.

REBUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in



and the other half of them held both the



and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded



and they that



with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his



and so builded. And he that sounded the



was by me.

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NEH. IV: 16-18.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS NEHEMIAH 4:7-21.

Prayer: Our Father, Grant unto us Thy Spirit that we may be made wise and willing in the re-building of the walls of Thy kingdom, where they are broken down. Grant us success in our fight against sin and temptation, and in our endeavor to build up strong Christian character. In the name of Christ. Amen.

"The world wants men-large-hearted, manly men: Men who shall join its chorus and prolong The psalm of labor and the psalm of love The age wants heroes-heroes who shall dare To struggle in the solid ranks of truth: To blot the error of oppression out, And lead a universal freedom in."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 445. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Nehemiah, rulers of Judah, Sanballat, Tobiah, etc., and people.

Scripture Setting: A Study in Work for God. Evil scorners of, Psa. 123:3-4; Psa. 79:11-12; Prov. 3:34. Building the future kingdom, Dan. 9:25-27. Foes, Psa. 83:3-5. God's protection, Isa. 8:10; Psa. 50:14-15. Courage in, 2 Sam. 10:12. Foes overcome, Job 5:12. The Lord's help, Exod. 14:14, 24-25; Deut. 1:30; 3:21-22; 20:2-4; Josh. 23:10; Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 8:31. Armor of God, Eph. 6:11. 6:11.

Life and Conduct Setting: Some special features of this lesson are-1. Nehemiah made a personal investigation of the situation. As a leader became thoroughly familiar with every detail. 2. "Each

built over against his own house." He did the thing nearest at hand, God has placed us in families and united us in business and social relations that we might be helpful to one another. 3. Those who lived outside the city helped. It was a national affair. The whole people stood or fell with the capital. Our home, our town, our state, our nation, place obligations on us. 4. They used the material at hand. Into the new they put what they could of the old. 5. The building was done by piece-work. Every man's work affected his credit and his influence. 6. The sword and trowel were both used: one to combat the evil, the other to build up the good. 6. They had opposition. It always comes when the good is proposed. 7. Success came at last, but by hard and persistent work.

UNDER DIFFICULTIES. BUILDING A CITY WALL

Old-Time Cities. It was a fine thing to have part in rebuilding the walls of a city in the old days. Without these it was defenceless. It would seem odd to us nowadays to see a city with huge stone walls all around it and with no way to enter it except through great gates. But before gunpowder came into use and cannon were made all cities were surrounded by vast stone These were sometimes twenty and thirty feet high and from five to ten feet The walls of Babylon were indeed so wide that chariots could pass each other on the top of them.

Jerusalem had been thus protected for ages, but foes had torn down these defences, and during the captivity the site of the city lay open. Most of the houses also had been destroyed. The temple had been rebuilt, but the defences had not been repaired. In our world today the same is true of many things in a moral and spiritual sense. Many good causes lie open to attack from evil sources, and we are called, just as Nehemiah was, to help build the defences.

When Nehemiah made his request of Artaxerxes to go up to the help of his ancestral city, the king, being greatly attached to him, declared he could not let him go permanently, but he would give him leave of absence for as long a period as necessary. Nehemiah promised to return after the work of rebuilding should be accomplished. He was made governor of Jerusalem, and as such was furnished with an escort of cavalry, so that his journey was a safe one.

Opposition. Every good cause in the

world finds foes to antagonize it. It was so with Nehemiah's plans from the very beginning. Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite determined to give him trouble. Certain of the native people of Canaan, to whom the land had belonged before the conquest under Joshua, had left descendants, and these had always resented the presence of the Jews in that country. The tribes round about on the borders of Israel had given the Jews trouble all through their history in that land. When Jerusalem fell and the Jews were carried away, these Ammonites and Moabites, and others, had rejoiced, thinking the land would again be theirs. They were angry at every step taken for the return of the Jews. They had interfered with Ezra and had troubled the Jews ever since.

Whenever any evil is disturbed by good people it is certain to do all possible to interfere with the success of the good. If you drive the liquor traffic out of any community you may be sure it will strive to win its way back again by every device.

Planning. Careful Nehemiah arrived safely, and went about quietly to see what was needed and to plan the best way of undertaking the work. He did not at first announce for what purpose he came. He went out at night with a few men and surveyed the broken walls. When he had completed his view of the ruins, he called the rulers of the city together and addressed them. He told how the king had been touched by his story of the condition of Jerusalem and had given him authority to repair it. He reminded them of the antagonism of the native peoples and foretold that they would need courage in this undertaking. But he urged them to put their trust in God and to work diligently for the defence of the city. They were moved by his words and cried out, "Let us rise and build."

Now the mocking Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arabian, who were in the city and heard what was said, put the worst construction possible on the plan, and de-clared that Nehemiah was getting ready to rebel against the government of Artaxerxes. They cried out, "What is this thing ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" One of the hindrances to all good works is the evil interpretation that sinners put upon what is done. It is always easy to find a bad significance in anything. Evil is ready to start a rumor that selfishness, money, ambition or some like unworthy motive is at the bottom of every movement for public or individual welfare. Evil-minded persons have no conception of the possibility of unselfish devotion to anything. They know their own hearts as evil and they attribute the same to everybody else.

All Together. All went to work. In general each man repaired "over against his own house," the part nearest and most convenient for him to reach. The names of certain of those who wrought are given in the Scriptures, and so they immortalized themselves by their useful service. It seemed doubtless a prosaic way to gain a name in the Divine Writings to lay stones in a wall, but that was a patriotic and religious task and it was worthier of record than many of the deeds that have brought men fame. All such as gave themselves to this service could not be mentioned, but their work spoke for them. It is not necessary to win a name; it is only essential that we do our share.

The earnest beginning of this building showed their enemies that the workers meant to diligently go on to the end. This stirred them to greater indignation. Doubtless many of the workers were but poor masons and this exposed the result of their labors to ridicule. Tobiah in mockery said, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." But scorn did not stop the faithful toilers. Enraged by beholding the walls grow day and night, the foes conspired to join together and interfere by force. They made several armed attacks and slew many Jews. They hired certain foreigners to try to assassinate Nehemiah, but this failed. That brave leader appointed a body guard for his protection and persevered. He thus protected himself not from fear of death, but for the sake of the cause.

Working and Watching. He also had his followers arm themselves. Half of the people worked while the other half stood ready with weapons to protect them. Every one carried a weapon while at his toil, a sword girded on, or a weapon in one hand and a tool in the other. A trumpeter stood by the side of Nehemiah, and in case of an attack he sounded his trumpet as an alarm to those who were far off on the other side.

In this world where evil is ever ready to give battle to the good, we must be armed for spiritual contests. We must work while furnished with the whole armor of God.

So for two years and four months these Jews, under their faithful leader, pursued diligently their great undertaking. It was a tremendous task, but at last it was done. Earnest, self-sacrificing men, who had given themselves all those months to the task, now rejoiced to see the splendid result. Jerusalem, the beloved city, was safely enclosed.

Earthly glory passes, but work for God abides forever. When Isaac Newton was asked, late in life, to explain a passage in his work on mathematics, he could only answer, "I knew once that it was true." So the greatest mind fails. It is told that when the Duke of Marlborough was old, a friend, to entertain him, read him the history of his own campaigns. Forgetting his own part in that warfare, he asked from time to time, "Who commanded?" So earthly glory is forgotten even by those on whose heads it rests. But good deeds abide forever.

When Alexander the Great was ill, his trusted physician began to prepare him some medicine to drink. Meanwhile, he received a letter warning him that the physician was about to poison him. While Alexander was reading the epistle the physician came with the potion in his hands. Alexander took the cup in one hand and gave the letter to his friend, while he quickly swallowed the medicine to show his faith in his physician. When God gives us hard things to do or to suffer the world tries to make us doubt him. The wisest course is to drink our cup, and do our work with absolute faith in our Heavenly Father.

faith in our Heavenly Father.

Practical Truths. 1. Many who lived far from Jerusalem came and took part in the work. Wherever we live, our hearts should be warm with love for Zion. 2. Co-working for defence of religion and country brings hearts together and forms the strongest bond of union. 3. We learn from the history that the nobles of Tekoah took no part, but opposed the work. It is often true that those with money and position are most indifferent to religious efforts. Others must be ready to carry on Christ's work without them. 4. The mechanics worked with the priests. They received and deserved the same honor. 5. Nehemiah was a layman and not a priest. He is therefore a fine example of lay work for God and his example should be an encouragement to others.

READING AND OBEYING THE LAW

And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by



that the children of Israel should dwell in



in the feast of the seventh month: And that they should publish and



in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and



olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and



and branches
of thick trees,
to make
booths, as it
is written.
So the people
went forth,
and brought
them, and
made
themselves
booths,
every one



of his house, and in their courts, and in the



of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the



of the gate of Ephraim.

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NEH, VIII: 14-16.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS NEHEMIAH 8:1-18.

Prayer: Our Father, We thank Thee for Thy great, holy law, and we pray that we may ever revere and obey it. Give us wisdom and understanding in Thy truths. Help us to hide it in our hearts that we may not sin against Thee. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Holy Bible, book Divine, Precious treasure, thou art mine; Mine to tell me whence I came, Mine to teach me what I am, Mine to chide me when I rove, Mine to show a Savior's love.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 444. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Nehemiah, Ezra, priests, Levites and people.

Scripture Setting: Study of the Law. The Law, according to Jewish usage, was the five books of Moses. The Ten Commandments, a condensation of the Law, Exodus 20. Command to obey, 2 Chron. 6:16. Perfect, Psa. 19:7. In the heart, Psa. 37:31. Peace from, Psa. 119:165. Christ fulfills, Matt. 5:17.

Life and Conduct Setting: This lesson shows five effects of the careful study of God's Word. 1. Repentance. Always a result of the entrance of God's Word. "Their grief was occasioned by the vision of their own miserable imperfection in con-

trast to the lofty requirements of the law." 2. Joy in the Lord. Joy that sins are forgiven. Joy in fellowship with God. Joy of hope; of possibilities; of Heaven. Joy of victory over sin and evil. The joy of loving and being loved by God. 3. Generous giving to those in need. 4. Consecration to God. A covenant of renewed devotion to the Law and service of God was entered into and signed by the leaders. 5. A higher morality. They renewed the temple service. Kept their feasts, paid tithes, brought in the firstfruits and reformed their worldly manner of keeping the Sabbath.—Peloubet.

THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORD GIVETH LIGHT.

Religious Liberty. Now the Jews assembled for worship. They were within a walled city, with the temple near by. They were thus protected from foes: their liberties and their right to worship were no longer at the mercy of aliens. They rejoiced in this blessed condition. Many people today negleet the church who would consider it from another point of view if the churches were destroyed and they were forbidden by foreigners to worship God. Then if a day would come when the churches were rebuilt and liberty to worship was restored they would flock to the houses of God. Like other blessings, this would brighten when lost. The Jews had been long enough without their temple and without the protection of a walled city to appreciate fully their restored privileges.

We cannot overrate the privilege of religious freedom. One of the greatest incentives of the early pioneers who left the Old World to settle in America was the right to worship God according to their consciences. The prayer meetings used to echo this feeling, for grandfathers had dwelt upon America's freedom in this respect. But now we have gotten so used to freedom and know so little about what it is to be without it that we do not appreciate it. Nevertheless it is a great boon; one to be prized and defended when necessary.

The Preacher. The Jews from all the region round about, as well as from within the city, assembled. The learned Ezra, who had led the first reformation some years before and who presumably had gone to Babylon

for some reason, had now returned to Jerusalem. He was the most learned man of his time in the Law of God, and it was he who now made ready to read the Scriptures to the people in public. Before the captivity the people had been regularly instructed in the law, but during that period and during the time of the restoration of the temple and the city walls this had been neglected. Indeed, few copies of it existed and these could not always be at hand. But a new order of things was begun.

Ezra appeared with a full copy of the Scriptures as written up to that time. The people gathered as one man in the street before the water gate. In our day the people are so used to hearing the Scriptures read from the pulpit and to reading them for themselves that oftentimes they give little attention. But to that people then present the Scriptures were practically new. They assembled to hear them with more enthusiasm than they would have gathered for any other purpose. Everywhere the subject of conversation was that they were to hear the reading of the Law of God.

The Pulpit. Ezra stood on a pulpit, with six scribes on his right hand and seven on his left. This is the first time a pulpit is mentioned. Its purpose was, of course, to place the reader where he could be seen and heard. We cannot estimate the influence and blessings that have come from the pulpit through all these ages. Instruction in Divine things, changed lives, consolations, inspiration and help in a hundred ways have come to mankind from the pulpit. It was

doubtless the office of the scribes with Ezra, to relieve him by reading portions of the Scriptures from time to time. The people stood in ranks in front of the pulpit. And with them were thirteen other ministers, who also aided in helping the people to understand the Law. Ezra read in Hebrew and the scribes translated to the people, who had grown up in Babylon and spoke a mixed Chaldee dialect, so that the Hebrew had to be interpreted to some extent.

The Lesson. So began the reading to these returned Jews, the substance of that which we call the Old Testament. Then they heard unfolded before them the history of their nation, the story that we find in Genesis and Exodus, in Numbers and in the Kings. There they heard the wondrous narrative of all that their nation had accomplished and had suffered. The giving of the Law, the details as to what the Law was, its shaping influence upon their national character, the stories of obedience and of disobedience. were rehearsed. Anywhere and everywhere the Scriptures make an impression by their majesty, dignity and appeal to the heart and soul, but surely the appeal then and there, to that people to whom it was all fresh as if newly written and of whose ancestors the records told, must have been overwhelming.

The Result. We are told that all the people wept at what they heard, with regret for past glories and for the sins which had caused their great humiliations. But Nehemiah and Ezra bade them cease their grief and to eat and drink and provide for the needy, as the day was holy to God. Seven days were required for the completion of the reading, and these days were intermixed with hours of feasting and rejoicing. With branches of olive, pine, myrtle and palm they made booths on the roofs and in the courts of their houses, according to the custom at the feast of tabernacles.

After their repoicings, they turned to humiliation and penitence. A fast of two days was held. The Jews clad themselves in sackcloth, with ashes on their heads. Three hours were given to reading the Law. The morning sacrifice was offered, and some time was spent in silent confession and prayer. After the noon hour, the Levites appeared on the steps of the temple, calling on the people to stand and bless God. A hymn was sung, telling of God's mercies from the days of Abraham. They confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors and acknowledged the justice of God. They made a new covenant with God, which was put in writing,

and before evening this was sealed by princes, priests and Levites, while the people swore to obey the law of God.

If we could suppose the Bible to have been lost for several hundred years and that a copy should now be found, what do you imagine would be the sensation it would make! The first pages of the newspapers would be covered with accounts of the discovery and with extracts from the wonderful Book. Such as now seldom read it would not rest until they had read every word. The frequent neglect comes from lack of real understanding of its importance, interest, beauty and usefulness.

The effect of that public reading of the Law was lasting. The Jews from that time onward never neglected their Law. It is true, alas, that they fell into other sins, but it was not into the sin of forgetting outward reverence for the Book. We may be sure that whenever the Book of God is given to any people it will produce results. The Word cannot return unto Him void.

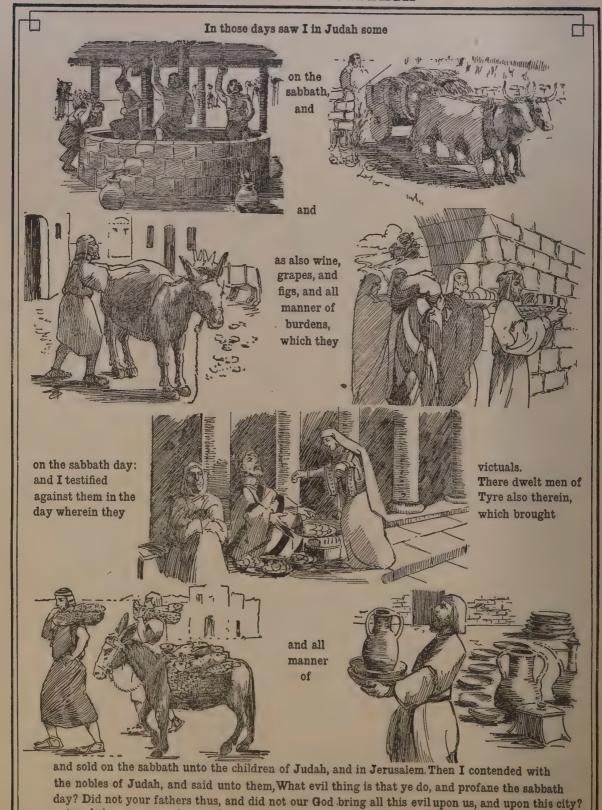
I knew an elderly man who told me he had never read the Bible through. At my persuasion he began a thorough reading of the Scriptures. After finishing the Book, he declared he had not in all his previous life read anything half so interesting. He had neglected for sixty years or more to read the volume which on his own statement is the most interesting in the world.

Carlyle declared that after people see the sunrise a second time it ceases to be a miracle to them. So readily do the most marvelous creations of God become commonplace to us. It is so in regard to the Scriptures. When Ezra read the Law to the Jews they were overwhelmed with emotion; it was new to that generation. But in our time most people are possessed of a superficial familiarity with much of Scripture by hearing it from the pulpit, and so they cease to marvel at its grandeur and beauty.

No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. England became the people of a Book, and that Book the Bible. Its literary and social effects were great, "but far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large." "A new conception of life, a new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."—Green's Short History of the English.

Practical Truths. 1. The greatest freedom is in obedience to the highest law, that of God. 2. The memorizing of passages of Scripture is a habit that is most valuable. Such passages continue to be a source of guidance and comfort throughout life. In addition, they become molding influences as to style. Ruskin said he owed much to the portions of Scripture his mother had induced him to commit to memory. 3. Most of all the Book reveals to us Christ, and because it enshrines the record of His life it is supreme. 4. Every nation now existing is great in proportion as the Bible is studied and obeyed.

KEEPING THE SABBATH



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yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

NEH. XIII: 15 18

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS NEHEMIAH 13:15-22.

Prayer: Our Father, May we reverence Thy holy day and use its rest and worship for the advantage of our souls, the honor of Thy kingdom and the well-being of our fellowmen. We thank Thee for

the good gift of the peaceful Sabbath in the midst of the days of effort and worldly care. In the name of Christ. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 434. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Nehemiah, priests, Levites and people.

Scripture Setting: A Study of the Sabbath. Command to keep, Exod. 20:8. Origin of, Gen. 2. A gift of God, Exod. 16:29. A rest day, Lev. 16:31. Punishment for breaking, Isa. 58:13. A sign, Ezek. 20:12. Proper use of, Matt. 12:13. Son of Manlord of, Matt. 12:8.

Life and Conduct Setting: We see herein how God is concerned for man's spiritual and bodily wel-

fare. His laws are not arbitrarily laid down, but are interrelated with all that pertains to man's best progress and highest condition. 1. The Sabbath is a Divine institution, established by Him who comprehends perfectly our best interests. 2. Response on our part by obedience is a wise recognition of the goodness of God. 3. We should resist the tendencies that blind men to the spiritual values of God's ordinance. 4. We should try to enable our fellow men to comprehend the true import of the Sabbath.

ONE OF GOD'S GREAT GIFTS TO MAN.

"The Sabbath was made for man," Christ tells us, and God our Creator knows what we need, what is good for body, mind and soul. It is sacred since God set it apart for sacred purposes, sacred because of the needs of man's nature to which it ministers. A day of rest and worship is just as essential as air, sunshine, food and sleep. It is true that man can exist without the Sabbath, but he cannot live his best life and do his best for God and man without it. It is not an arbitrary, superfluous law that creates the Sabbath; it is a kind arrangement of Providence.

Drifting Away. The Jews, some years after the restoration of Jerusalem, had drifted into careless ways as to the Sabbath. They had begun well, but had not kept on well in all respects. In their fresh enthusiasm after the reading of the Law, they had joined enthusiastically in all national and religious observances. The dedication of the wall had been a happy event. Ezra and Nehemiah had led two processions, one starting to the right and the other to the left, and with trains of priests, with trumpets and songs of praise, they had marched round the city. They had been willing to carry out the requirement that they be separated from the aliens, the Ammonites and Moabites, with whom some of them had mingled.

Nehemiah Needed Again. Then Nehemiah had gone back to Persia, according to his promise to the king Artaxerxes. We do not know how long he remained away, but again he heard of abuses at Jerusalem, and again he asked the king to permit him to visit Jerusalem. The high priest Eliashib had proved to be a weak man, and had allowed Nehemiah's old enemy Tobiah, the Ammonite, to have a chamber in the court of the temple. That place had been set apart for sacred vessels, for offerings, frank-

incense and oil. But Tobiah had appropriated it for his own business. The Levites had not been given support and so had forsaken the temple and had gone to the cities set apart for their class. A grandson of the high priest had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, who had been such a bitter opponent of the Jews. Moreover, the Sabbath was being violated in many respects. So Nehemiah returned.

A Cleansing of the Temple. He entered the temple and cast out the furniture of Tobiah from the chamber that Eliashib had given him, and he restored to their places the vessels of God's house. He brought the Levites back again. And he persuaded the people again to bring in the tithes.

Then he set about re-establishing observance of the Sabbath. He had found some treading wine presses on the holy day; some brought their sheaves in from their fields, and laded their asses. Foreigners brought their merchandise, wine, grapes, figs and other goods and crowded the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Men of Tyre brought fish and all manner of wares and sold these in the city, just as the pictures show.

Sabbath Restored. These violations of the law aroused the indignation of Nehemiah. He called together the rulers of the city and rebuked them for this profanation, reminding them that it was such disobedience that had brought ruin on them before. He ordered the gates to be closed at dusk the evening before and kept closed until the end of the Sabbath. He set his own servants to guard them and enforce the law. The merchants tried to evade this rule by pitching their tents round the wall, but this also was done away with, as he threatened to use force with them.

Queen Victoria was a conscientious observer of the Sabbath and never allowed matters of state to encroach upon that day. She declined to permit the highest noblemen to approach her on such subjects on the day of rest. A well-known merchant said to a clergyman, "Had it not been for the Sabbath and its peace and quiet, my business cares would have made a maniac of me long ago." When this was quoted in a company of merchants, one of them said, "That is the exact case of Mr. Blank. He was one of our greatest importers. He used to say the Sabbath was the day he planned successful voyages; showing that he gave his mind no rest. He has been in the insane hospital for years and will probably die there."

Once more the Sabbath came to be observed as a holy day. Peace and quiet spread over the land during those sacred hours. The abuses had doubtless crept in gradually, as such usually do, but the reformation was sudden and thorough.

Sabbath and Religion. We are to remember that the Sabbath is practically essential for all public, organized religion. One of the greatest American statesmen declared that there "can be no morality without religion, and there can be no religion without public worship." Without a day set apart for worship, rest and meditation, morality and religion would decline. Without the quiet and thoughtfulness and prayerfulness of the Sabbath there would be little spiritual growth. If there were no day set apart for sacred things, reverence and all the higher emotions would inevitably decay.

A Foe. Two great foes of the Sabbath exist. One of these was found in the days of Nehemiah. The desire to make money at the expense of the day of worship. Perhaps the foreigners, the Tyrian traders, introduced that spirit. They had no Sabbath; they cared nothing for Jewish customs. So they came with their merchandise. They found religious observances relaxed; the people were indulgently careless as to their business. Certain of the Jews tarried in passing, glanced at their goods, stopped, asked prices, bought some trifles. Then more came, and in a few weeks their Sabbath trade was established. Perhaps they started outside the gates, and then presently they were inside. So evils gradually grow.

Certain of the Jews themselves were tempted, by desire to save their crops, gain time, and began to work a little on an occasional Sabbath. Thus the evil spread.

Money Losses. In our own day business encroaches on the Sabbath. It is supposed to be necessary to run railway trains, passenger and freight. Certain great mill and

factory owners assert that it is only at much loss they can shut down for one day and then begin again on Monday. Back of it is, of course, the desire for gain. The loss is money loss. It is not considered that there are other losses involved, the loss to the workingmen of their right to a day of rest, the spiritual and moral loss to multitudes and to the nation itself.

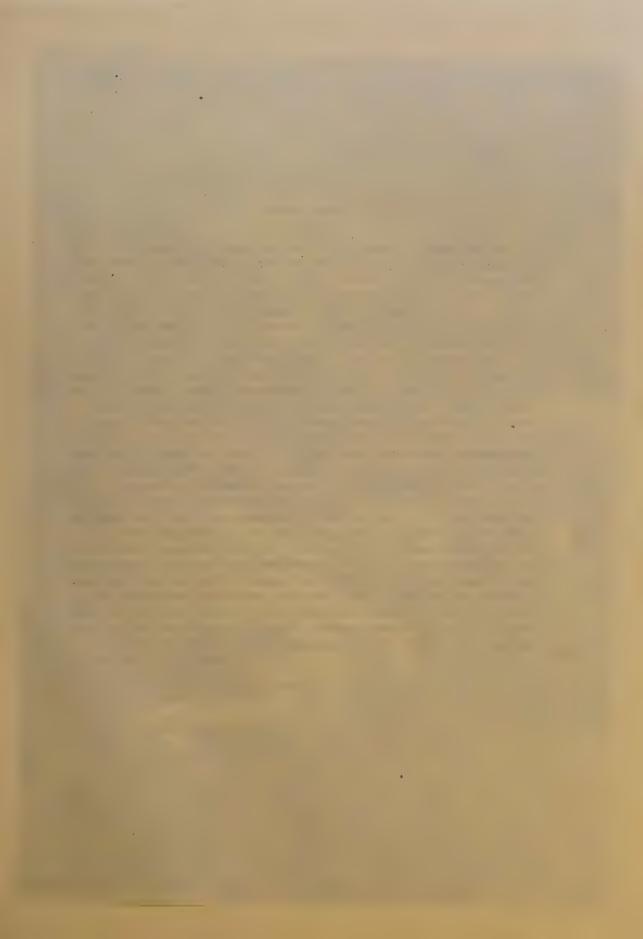
Pleasure. The other great cause of encroachment on the Sabbath is pleasure seeking. The desire to have a good time overrides duty, obligation, the value of spiritual instruction, the building of character, everything in its way. Multitudes have little thought of anything but to do as they please, go on excursions, drive, picnic, hunt or fish, and play games. So the very existence of the Sabbath as a holy day, as sacred to rest and worship, is threatened seriously.

Perils Today. Sabbath desecration, as found today, is a very serious and real peril. It threatens spiritual disaster to multitudes. It threatens to bring upon our people an increase of nervous evils through lack of a needed break in the busy, over-burdened week. The open stores, open factories, Sunday railway trains and traction cars, Sunday theaters and newspapers, the widespread custom of Sunday excursions and picnics, are among the evils that are leading thousands to violate the Sabbath.

America is no more assured of permanence than were those nations of the past that have perished. Many nations have fallen through disobedience to the Divine laws. We, too, must fall if we abuse the good gifts of God.

Lord Macaulay declared it was his observation and experience that a literary man would do more and better work, year after year, by observing Sunday as a day of rest. An association of twenty physicians voted "yes" unanimously on the question: "Is the position of Dr. Farre, in his testimony before the committee of the British House of Commons, in your view, correct?"—that men who labor six days in a week will be more healthy and live longer, other things being equal, than those who labor seven; and that they will do more work and do it in a better manner?

Practical Truths. 1. Our Maker understands our needs and has arranged for our well-being, if we observe His laws. 2. It may be a trial at times to be loyal to our convictions in regard to the Sabbath, but in the end we will be happier and better for so doing. 3. The temptations in our day to non-observance of the Sabbath are more numerous and alluring than ever before. To keep the Sabbath holy demands strength of will and force of character. 4. It is a common observation that those who begin by an occasional ride or picnic or excursion on the Sabbath soon come to a point where religion largely drops out of their lives and thoughts.



ESTHER BEFORE AHASUERUS

BY JULIUS SHRADER

The great king Ahasuerus was the sovereign of a vast territory in Asia; the most important part being Persia. In this country were many Jews who were captives but had climbed to the holding of high office. Among these was Mordecai, a favorite at court. These Jews were hated by the heathen officials. One of these, named Haman, had an important place in court. As Haman passed in and out, the Jew, Mordecai, refused to salute him. So Haman conspired against the Jews, to exterminate them, and he built a lofty gallows, especially to hang Mordecai on.

Ahasucrus had decreed that no one should enter his presence without a special invitation. To any intruder the king might reach out his scepter as a token of good will or he might condemn such a person to death. Queen Esther was a Jewess, a beautiful woman, who had been brought up in the family of Mordecai. She was induced to visit the king and attempt to protect the Jews. In appearing at court Esther risked her life. But her beauty moved the heart of Ahasucrus, so he reached out his scepter, and she secured the king's attention and checked the plottings of Haman, and finally caused this hater of the Jews to be hung on his own lofty gallows.

The artist Shrader is of the school which creates elegance, high finish and much beauty, not attempting to be absolutely literal. The king is dressed in magnificently embroidered robes so heavy that the wrinkles are ponderous. He reaches out his scepter. Esther is represented as greatly affected, but she is supported by a faithful servant. Here is an arrangement, used by many artists, to give effect to the graceful lines and beautiful faces of young Jewish women. He introduced immediately the strong square features of the old attendant, and the faces of the two charming children. One of these is the king's fan bearer. Every detail is carefully wrought out and the story is completed by the presence of the armed guard with his spear.

—James William Pattison



ESTHER BEFORE AHASUERUS.

JULIUS F. SCHRADER. 1815-1900.

Julius F. Schrader was born in Berlin, on the 16th of June, 1815, two days before the battle of Waterloo. In this great battle many relatives and friends of his father undoubtedly fought, for Berlin, the capital of the kingdom of Prussia and of the present German empire, nine years before had been captured by the great Napoleon, who at Waterloo went down to defeat at the hands of the English and Prussian armies, under command of Wellington and Blucher.

When old enough to walk, hand in hand with his father, up and down Unter den Linden (under the lindens), Berlin's im-perial highway, he often strolled. With the great Brandenburg gate at the one end, and on either hand the palaces of German kings and princes, with monuments and statues of many of the historic and allegorical heroes of the German people, there quickly arose in the growing lad a sense of the romance of the past years of his country's history, which for the Germans, perhaps, more than for any other folk, bulk large in imagination, with a sort of mythological grandeur.

Painting and drawing continually, with such material as he could obtain, it was presently decided by the family council that Julius must make something of his talent, so at fourteen years old to drawing school he at the famous Academy of Berlin. for long hours every day he drew and painted from the living model till after some time of faithful work every exterior form and appearance of man, woman or child, of every conceivable type, representing all imaginable actions and sentiments, was as certain to him as the recital of the alphabet. From the earliest of his student days he was endowed with a rare sense of color and ambitious of its realization. With stern self-discipline he repressed impatience and studied form faithfully, till at last, painting with a full palette, there was in his work such a perfection of form, especially in the nude, in union with a splendid sense of color that marks him among painters.

In the realm of history, to illustrate the wideness of his knowledge, Schrader's grasp of a subject was so complete, so fully realized that his historical pictures are noted for their archaeologic accuracy, quite apart from their greatness of conception as works of fine art.

For eight years the young man studied and worked at the Berlin academy. In 1810 in Rome a little group of devout-minded men had gathered—the German Pre-Raphaelites, ---whose aim as painters was to revive German art as a means of religious and moral expression. They felt that the painter's work should be consecrated to the service of morality and religion—that unless it was for the mental and moral elevation of mankind, art was vain. Their influence reached young Schrader, and in 1837 he placed himself under the tutelage of one of the most famous of this body, Herr Schadow, of Dusseldorf.

Wilhelm Friedrich von Schadow, of Berlin, director of its academy till 1819, and of that at Dusseldorf from 1826 to 1859, was the founder of a great school of German religious painters, as his brother, Johann Schadow, the sculptor, was founder of the Berlin School of Sculpture.

For eight years more the growing man worked under Schadow. In 1845 he went to Rome. As with many others, this was the keystone that made complete with inspiration the structure of scholarship and mastery that had all these years been a-building. He painted his first really important picture, "The Capitulation of Calais," founded on that most romantic incident of English and French history: the siege of the city by Edward III and the British forces in 1347. This is in the National Gallery at Berlin. Two years later a notable incident of German history was pictured, "Frederick the Great After the Battle of Kolin'' (1849, Leipsiz Museum). The year after this came another, "Wallenstein and Seni." The "Death of Leonardo da Vinci'' (1851) was the work that firmly established his reputation as a leader of German painters of his time, and a professorship in the Berlin Academy, in which he had been a student, was offered him.

In mural painting, as well as in easel pictures, his strength was shown, as in the fresco in the New Museum at Berlin, "The Consecration of the Church of Saint Sophia at Constantinople," an impressive occurrence in the early history of the Christian church; and in the mural paintings in the Chapel Royal, Berlin.

Other well-known works are "The Parting of Charles I from His Family," in which is shown the farewell of the ill-fated King Charles Stuart of England to his children, prior to his execution by order of Parliament, under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell; "Esther Before Ahasuerus" (1856), and the "Homage of Berlin and Colognein, 1415" (1874), all of which are in the National Gallery at Berlin.

JAMES BEALINGS.

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther



her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the



sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the



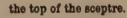
of the house. And it was so. whenthe kingsaw Esther the



that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king



that was in his hand. SoEsther drew near



ESTHER V: 1-2.

ESTHER BEFORE THE KING

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.



said,
Cause
Haman
to make
haste, that
he may do
as Esther
hath said.
So the
king and
Haman
came to



that Esther
had prepared.

* * *
Then went
Haman forth
that day
joyful and
with a glad
heart: but
when Haman
saw Mordecai
in the king's



that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indig ~ nation against



Haman
refrained
himself: and
when he came
home, he sent
and called for
his friends, and
Zeresh his



And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS ESTHER 5:1-14.

Prayer: Our Father, May we always have that confidence in Thee which may lead us into Thy presence with our petitions in all our seasons of need, knowing that the scepter of Thy favor will be held out to us. We would venture thus with boldness, since Thou art our Father and Thou art merciful and good. In the name of Christ. Amen.

"If only we strive to be pure and true,

To each of us all there will come an hour

When the tree of life shall burst into flower,

And rain at our feet a glorious dower,

Of something grander than ever we knew."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 488. Place, Susa or Shushan, the capital of the Persian empire. Its ruins are three miles in circumference. The remains of the great palace built by Darius, the father of Xerxes, in which the scenes of this lesson occurred, have been found. The great central hall is 343x244 feet. Persons, Esther, Ahasuerus, Mordecai and Haman.

Scripture Setting: A Study in Confidence in God. Boldness, Heb. 4:16. The Lord our confidence, Prov. 3:26; Psa. 65:5. Hold it fast, Heb. 3:6. A great recompense, Heb. 10:35. A clear conscience helps, 1 John 3:21. The measure of, 1 John 5:14. In Christ, Eph. 3:12. Concerning others, 2 Thess. 3:4. In death, 2 Cor. 5:8.

Life and Conduct Setting: "The destiny of God's people depended not only on the humors of this Persian king in general, but also upon the impression which a woman might make on that monarch. This must appear as very peculiar and highly significant. Women have exerted a decisive influence upon the destinies of nations. We have the view of Esther standing before the king, not as a wife before her husband, but as a petitioner before a sovereign. This represents the condition of the church of the dispersion. The king represents worldly power bearing rule over God's people.

. . But true worth dwells with Esther, who, impelled by love for her people, risks even her life."

TWO WOMANLY QUEENS.

Esther is one of the few women who have a holiday in their honor, and she well deserved this tribute from her countrymen the Jews. The Feast of Purim, which, among the Jews, celebrates the deliverance from foes as recorded in this book, has as its central character the queen Esther. She stands in the grateful remembrance of Jews with Deborah and Judith. If, however, holidays were appointed for all the good women who have dared and suffered for their loved ones the whole year would be devoted to such celebrations. We can honor them, however, in other ways, and one way is to be worthy of them by living brave, good lives and making the world better. The effect of Esther's heroism upon the Jews has been to make them love their nation more, as well as honor her memory. And that is the true effect of an inspiring and noble life.

The King. The king, called in this book Ahasuerus, is known to secular history as Xerxes, and it was he who tried to invade Greece and was driven back so disastrously by those brave people. The book of Esther opens shortly after that event, when Xerxes had returned to his own country. It is possible he wished to display to his own followers that he was still glorious and powerful, and so he proclaimed a great feast. He invited all the important people of his vast empire and they came from far and near. He erected an immense tent capable of holding ten thousand guests, adorned it in the most magnificent manner, and in this his great feast was held. In addition he entertained the lords and governors elsewhere in the most magnificent way. He showed them his palaces, his jewels and his vast hoards of gold and silver.

The Feast. Then he assembled them for the feast. There they were served from vessels of pure gold, and every conceivable luxury was set before them, while all drank to excess of the wines provided. Such a royal feast is supposed to reveal to us high life, but in fact it shows us low life. The abundance, the luxury, the lavish display, cannot hide the fact that it was a drunken revel. disgraceful to human nature. The drunken men were in fact just as repulsive and beastly as the lowest outcast in his cups. Ahasuerus' real disposition came out as that of a boaster and a capricious tyrant. His queen, Vashti, was at the same time giving a feast to her ladies, but we may be sure it was of a different character, as she showed her womanly nature in all she did. The drunken king, having boasted of everything else, began to boast of his queen, declaring she was the most beautiful of women. Certain of his excited guests proclaimed their wish to behold her, and the king, to satisfy a drunken fancy, ignoring the law of the kingdom which forbade such an action, summoned the queen to the feast of men. Nobly did Vashti reveal her dignity of character in refusing to come. So is every good woman justified in declining to enter conditions that compromise her dignity and womanhood.

Vashti's Fall. It is not to be expected that a sane view of her conduct would be

taken under the circumstances. The king should have been proud of her womanliness, but instead he was angered. His wine-inspired councillors declared he should make an example of her to other women; that if such an influence got abroad among their wives they would all rebel against what men bade them do. On such advice Ahasuerus declared he would divorce Vashti, which he did.

Esther Made Queen. Then he sought among the maidens of his empire for the most beautiful one to take the place of the ex-queen. She who proved to be the most charming was a Jewess, named in the Persian language Esther, or a star, and in the Hebrew, Hadassah, or myrtle. She was the adopted daughter of a Jew, Mordecai, who was also her cousin. They were of the people who did not return to Jerusalem at the restoration, and Mordecai held some position among the officials of the monarch. Esther became queen and gained great influence over the king.

It is extraordinary how events that seem small in themselves, and come as it were by accident, play a great part in the larger issues. This Mordecai, who was relatively obscure, and who, apparently, after her elevation to the throne, kept apart from Esther lest the fact that she was a Jewess should become known, happened to overhear certain conspirators who were planning to assassinate the king. He made the plot known and the would-be murderers were hanged. was made of the occurrence in the chronicles of the court, but in the hurry of events the king forgot to reward Mordecai. This happening proved later to be of great signifi-We should not despise the relation of events to each other, but should do well the duty that is nearest and be sure every good deed will bear upon the future.

Haman's Pride. There are people who are never satisfied with what they have gained, no matter how much this may be, but are always reaching after more and more of honor or power. Haman was such a man. He was a high officer of the king, chief vizier, and he was possessed of so great authority that whenever he passed by, in his chariot on the streets or walking in the palace, all men rose up and bowed to him. But Mordecai, perhaps knowing the real character of the man, had often provoked Haman by refusing to stand up in his presence. This appears a trifling matter, but with Haman's disposition it became a great grievance. It was not enough that all other

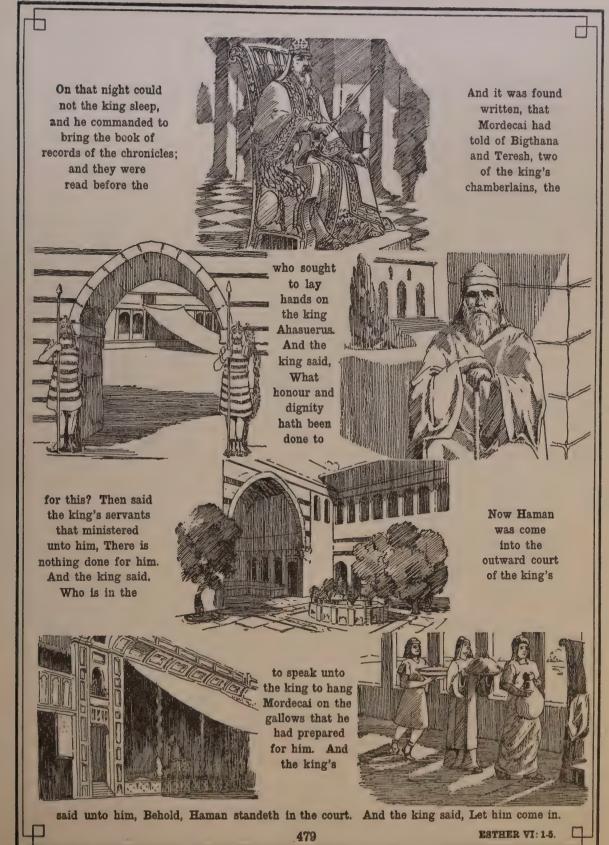
people should salute him; all was spoiled since one man did not. Others are often equally foolish. They forget the good they have and magnify what they do not have.

Mordecai's conduct became a thorn in the flesh of Haman, and since he could not kill him legally, he hit upon a plan to excite the hatred of the king against all Jews. Slandering the Jews to the monarch, he persuaded Ahasuerus to sign a decree authorizing a general slaughter of these people on a certain day.

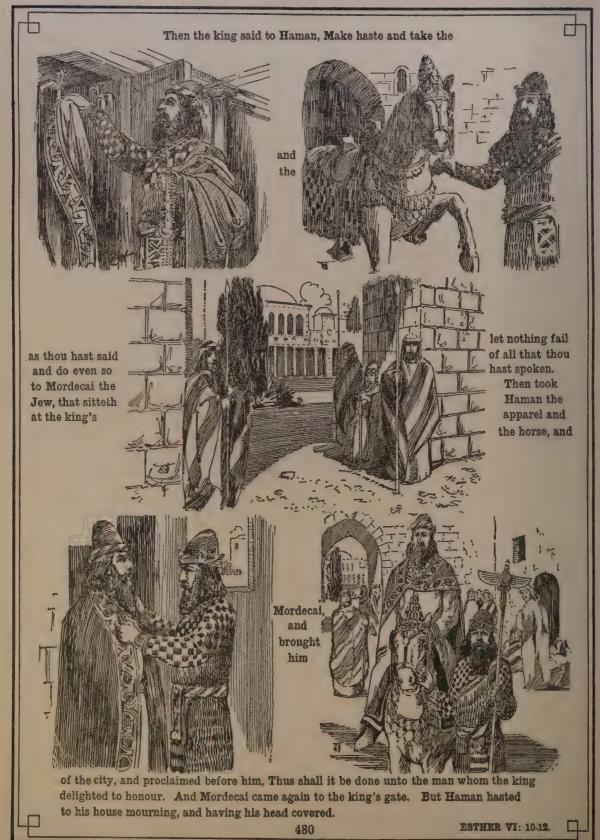
Esther's Lack of Courage. Terrified at this dreadful news, Mordecai sought a private interview with queen Esther, urging that it was her duty to save her people, and that she herself might be in peril if it became known that she was a Jewess. She was a true woman, loyal to her people, anxious to save her relative Mordecai, and she determined to brave all difficulties to this But she faced the peril in her own She used shrewd judgment and all her faculties of charm. No one dared enter the presence of such an Oriental tyrant as Ahasuerus without special summons, and he had not asked for Esther in many days. But she must reach the king. She arrayed herself in her most beautiful garments and ventured into the throne room. Beside the king stood the axemen, ready at a signal from him to sever the head of man or woman if so commanded. On the throne sat the king, holding his golden scepter. There was the moment of suspense, and then the king smiled upon his beautiful queen and extended his scepter.

When graciously received and bade to offer her request, unto the half of his kingdom, she smilingly asked that the king and his vizier Haman accept her invitation to a banquet. Ahasuerus, in his gentlest mood, accepted. And from that feast Haman went to his home exulting over the honor done him, and dreaming of future honors, not knowing that a plan was being laid which would end sadly for him and his ambitions.

Practical Truths. 1. There is an opportuneness in duty. Mordecai said to Esther that she "had come to the kingdom for such a time as this." She had risen to such a height for the purpose of meeting a crisis in the affairs of her own race. She nobly met the crisis, was equal to the time and its demand. 2. It is by love for a cause, for God, for humanity, for country, for home, for righteousness that any become capable of rising to the performance of great duties. 3. Esther used the means at hand. She was not foolhardy, but wise and even shrewd. She risked life, it is true, but she was forced to do that to accomplish anything. When the king received her graciously, she did not spring on him suddenly her real object. She asked him to a feast. The best ends may be defeated by abrupt, too hasty words and actions.



HAMAN AND MORDECAL



THE SORIPTURE ACCOUNT IS ESTHER 6:1-14.

Prayer: Our Father, Purify our hearts, we pray Thee, from all evil passions. Help us to guard against envy, hatred, jealousy and all malice. In the name of Christ. Amen. "Envy at others' good is evermore
Malignant poison sitting on the soul;
A double woe to him infected with it.
Of inward pain the heavy load he bears,
At sight of joy without, he ever mourns."
—Lewis.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 488. Place, Susa. Persons, Mordecai, Haman, Esther and Ahasuerus.

Scripture Setting: A Study of the Heart. A clean heart, Psa. 51:10. A bad heart, Psa. 55:21. A wise, 1 Kings 3:12. To God, Prov. 23:26. Abominations in, Prov. 26:25. Folly of trust in, Prov. 28:26. Keeping commandments with, Prov. 3:1. Law on, Prov. 3:3. Trust God with, Prov. 3:5. Retaining His words, Prov. 4:4. With diligence, Prov. 4:23. Worthlessness of wicked, Prov. 10:20. Life and Conduct Setting: "Remark in Haman

Life and Conduct Setting: "Remark in Haman the stupendous and wonderful judgment of God.

For the impious Haman is most exultant and fearless as regards the preservation and augmentation of his dignity and power; and he is most certain also of the destruction of Mordecai, whom he prosecutes with hatred. But behold now the end of the thing. The impious and secure Haman shall perish with sudden destruction, while the pious and afflicted Mordecai is unexpectedly raised to the highest dignity. Let us therefore cast away all impious security and fear God; so that, walking according to the calling of God, we may be preserved though the sky fall and the earth be removed."

THE DEFEAT OF A WICKED PLOTTER.

At the first banquet Esther gave the king and Mordecai she requested Ahasuerus that he and his vizier should come a second time. He was so fascinated by his queen and her hospitality that he gladly granted her wish. When Haman boasted to his family that night of his honors, he confessed that all was marred by the fact that on his way to the queen's feast Mordecai declined again to salute him. But his wife appeased him by suggesting that he have Mordecai hanged, and he declared that this would be a good end of his foe. So sure did he feel he could carry out this infamy that he at once ordered a gallows to be made.

The Turning Point. The thoughts of the king that night differed from Haman's. He could not sleep, and after his custom he called for a scribe to read from the court chronicles. During those hours of diversion the account was rehearsed of what Mordecai had done to save the life of the king. Ahasuerus, in a moment of realization of his rescue from peril, learned that nothing had been done as a reward to Mordecai. He vowed he would honor him above all men in some manner.

On the very next morning Haman came to ask the king for permission to hang Mordecai, but the king, full of his enthusiasm for the man who had saved his life, broke in with a question as to what the king should do for the man he most delighted to honor. Haman, thinking himself to be the man, pictured a street scene in which he should be the central figure. The king should clothe the man with his own apparel, mount him on the king's horse, place his crown on his head, have the horse led by one of the greatest princes through the streets, and proclaim be-

fore him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

This dream of selfish glorification was speedily shattered when Ahasuerus bade him deal thus with Mordecai. That was perhaps the bitterest hour of Haman's life. All his plotting had come to nothing and he was personally forced to act that which seemed to him a degrading part. We may be sure that his voice rang with little enthusiasm as he called out the words of the king's proclamation.

Haman's End. Ashamed, humiliated, covering his head, he hastened home. But he had brief space to nurse his grief when a messenger came to take him to the queen's banquet. There came the dramatic climax of his troubles in which his insane folly had involved him. When the king, well pleased, bade Esther make further requests, she cried out for mercy upon her people. She reminded the king of the cruel decree and of the approaching slaughter of the Jews. The monstrous story touched the king and he demanded the author of such a villainy. Esther terrified Haman by pointing him out and declaring that it was his evil doing. Justice speedily followed, and Haman was suspended upon the gallows he had ordered for Mordecai. As the king's decree was irrevocable, it was met with a second decree permitting the Jews to arm themselves and make their defence. In this they were successful, so that comparatively few were harmed. Haman's house was presented to Mordecai and he was exalted to a high place and covered with many honors.

Results of Jealousy. All Haman's disasters arose from a groundless and needless jealousy. He was jealous of every one who

had the least credit or position and who retained pride enough to refuse to bow to him, though it could not but be known that he was unworthy of his position. We enter the zone of danger whenever we allow this over-esteem of ourselves and under-estimation of others to find place in our lives. IIaman not only had enough, but he had too much. "Ambition grows by what it feeds on." The appetite for praise becomes insatiable, monstrous, all-devouring.

Nothing is more perilous than attempts at vengeance for real or fancied wrongs. It starts trains of evil that go beyond our power to stop. It is like dealing with something too strong for us. It is an engine that gets up high speed while the man in the cab is ignorant of how to shut off the power. Haman could have lived a life of honor if he had chosen; could have continued a favorite of the king all his life, but in attempting to destroy another he destroyed himself.

The folly of his course is monstrously shown in the growth of his hatred until he was willing to slay thousands of innocent people who had never offended him in order to reach one single man. When the evil passions have way they become immeasurably cruel. No demon could have devised anything more irrational, unjust, merciless, than to plot to murder thousands of Jews in order to kill Mordecai. We should never forget that all evil hardens the heart. It is its very nature to do so. The cruelty of sin is unspeakable; nothing is considered that stands in its way; home, friendships, country, decency, honor, all are overridden; everybody concerned is trampled upon.

Mordecai's Advancement. Mordecai was justly honored. He quietly attended to the duties of his office. When he had opportunity to save the life of the king, he did so and made no fuss about it, did not advertise himself, did not complain when no reward came. He pursued his way. He effaced himself that Esther might be advanced; he kept away from the queen lest the knowledge that she was a Jewess would injure her. He did not seek her until a crisis arrived when it was evidently her duty to save her people. Mordecai did not speak for himself but for his race, and doubtless for the safety of the queen herself. When Mordecai was advanced after the death of Haman it appears that he fulfilled his duties in a sane, wise way for the honor of the king, the good of his own race, and the welfare of all the people.

Haman was an upstart. He is called "an Agagite," probably an Amalekite. Such a man would have a strong dislike of Jews. He had risen to power through one of those revolutions that occurred among Oriental monarchies, by which suddenly the ruling powers were destroyed, new rulers arose, and their followers, often of the basest kind, got to the top. If he had been born to power he would not have been so exacting as to every trifling sign of respect. It is of the nature of the upstart to suspect others if they omit the least observance or outward honor toward him.

In the overthrow of Haman and the exaltation of Mordecai we may behold the workings of the overruling Providence. While wrong is often temporarily enthroned, in the end the good comes into its own.

in the end the good comes into its own.

Envy produces all manner of evils. Caligula killed his own brother because he was handsome, while he himself was ugly. A Roman named Mutius was of such a notoriously envious disposition that one Publius said, when he observed that he looked sad, "Either some great calamity has happened to Mutius or some great good to another." Plutarch said in regard to Dionysius the tyrant, he "punished Philoxenius, the musician, out of envy because he could sing, and Plato, the philosopher, because he could dispute better than himself." Cambyses killed his brother Smerdis because he could draw a stronger bow than he or any of his party.

There is a Greek story of one who was envious of one of his fellow citizens to whom a statue had been erected. This man had been a victor in the public games. The other was so jealous of his reputation that he went several nights to the spot where the statue stood and strove to cast it down. After he had tried this several times he succeeded in moving it from its pedestal. But in its fall it crushed himself. This is the legitimate result of envy.

A youth who had been wronged by another visited an old hermit and told him he had made up his mind to be avenged. The good man tried to persuade him from his purpose in vain. Finally he said, "At least, my young friend, let us pray together before you execute your purpose." He began to pray thus, "It is no longer necessary, O God, that Thou shouldst defend this young man, and declare Thyself his protector, since he has taken upon himself the right of seeking his own revenge." This prayer so smote the youth's conscience that he fell on his knees and prayed for pardon for his wicked design.

Practical Truths. 1. It is essential that by a good life and kindly deeds you should deserve honor. If you do not meet with recognition, you will still have done your duty. If recognition comes, it should be utilized not for vainglory, but for further service. 2. We must always count upon the misunderstanding, dislike or hatred of a certain kind of people against righteousness and religion. 3. The Christian does not assume to be better in himself than others, but he strives to get on the right side with God, and that is the strong side. 4. Evil carries in itself the seeds of decay. Haman, being like a tree decaying at the heart, was certain to fall.

THIRD DIVISION THE POETICAL BOOKS





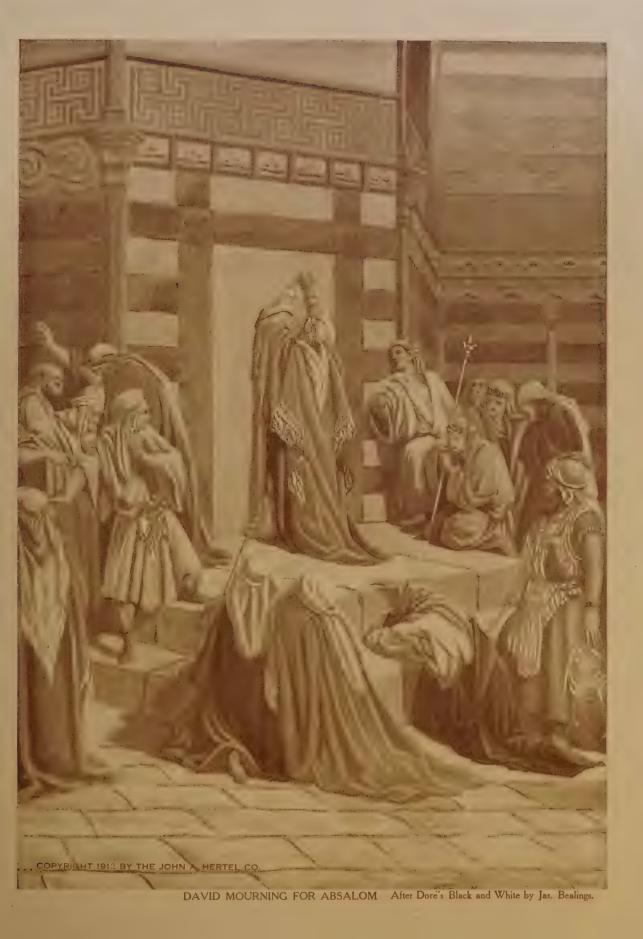
DAVID MOURNING FOR ABSALOM

BY DORE

Absalom, David's son, rebelled against his father's rule, in his ambition to rule over the land; as has been true of a great many active and energetic youths. So David gathered his forces to fight this troublesome uprising. As David's army passed out, the king charged each one to fight the rebels, but that no man should raise his hand to injure his beloved son, Absalom. In a thick forest where the battle was fought, Absalom, riding under a great oak tree, was caught by the head among the branches. His riding animal went out from under him and left him hanging helplessly in the tree. When it was told to Joab, David's chief general, that the young man was thus helpless, the general disobeyed orders and killed the hapless youth. The news having been brought to David, he retired to his chamber and wept, saying: "—— would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son."

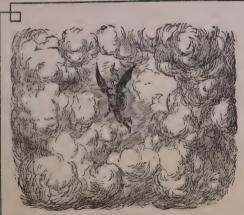
Here is another dramatic picture, by the famous Gustave Doré. We see David in the chamber of mourning where he has thrown himself against the wall in sore grief, which is forcefully suggested by his attitude. Of course, there are contrasts in the clothing of the king and his attendants. There are two figures; on the left one who protests with the king, on the right one who takes an attitude of great surprise; others are with bowed heads weeping in sympathy with the king; some kneel in front of the platform, showing every shade of grief, and so the line is carried to the left, where the same feeling is expressed. The soldier, with his helmet, breastplate and shield, looks on with that stolid indifference which soldiers are supposed to feel. The sense of solemn grief is carried throughout the picture.

-JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON





THE AFFLICTIONS OF JOB



So went

forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the



unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to



withal; and he



among the ashes.
Then said his



unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish



speaketh.
What! shall
we receive
good at the
hand of God,
and shall we
not receive



In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS JOB 2:1-10.

Prayer: Our Father, We pray that Thou wilt | help us to be strong and patient in the midst of all our experiences, even as was Thy servant Job. May | chastening. In Christ's name. Amen.

we believe in Thy goodness though at the time it may not be plain to us what is the meaning of Thy

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, about 1520 B.C. Place, the Land of Uz, probably the Hauran. Persons, Job, Satan, Job's wife.

Scripture Setting: Study of the Design of Suffering. To prove men, Deut. 8:2, 3. To keep from the pit, Job 33:16-30. To refine, Mal. 3:3. To manifest works of God, John 9:2. To produce more fruit, John 15:2. For consolation and salvation, 2 Cor. 1:6. To manifest life of Jesus, 2 Cor. 4:11, 17. To

chasten, Heb. 12:5-11. For glory of Christ, I Pet. 1:7. To perfect and establish, I Pet. 5:10.

Life and Conduct Setting: The Mystery of Pain. Suffering makes the most thoughtless to think. 2. The Bible reveals the goodness of God even in the most painful experiences. 3. One of the greatest problems in the world is that of the existence of pain and evil. 4. The wife of Job was blind to the deeper meaning of events. There is in fact light beyond the pain. 5. Nearly every good in human nature and in the world has come to us out of sacrifice and pain. 6. All suffering is not punishment for sin, though sin brings dreadful consequences. 6. God chastens as a Father. God desires to have us grow into the best possible men and women. The best people who have ever lived have believed most firmly in the value of the trials that came to them. 7. Remember that the common view of un-Christian men and women is sure to be wrong. Let us look to the Word of God for such views of life and experience as are noble, high, ennobling and strengthening.

HOW A GOOD MAN TRIUMPHED.

A Real Hero. There is no greater literature in the world than the book of Job, and no more pathetic; but no more heroic figure ever marched across the stage, upon which the mighty drama of life is being enacted. His was a soul well worth that desperate game which the devil played. And what a devil! Cynical, subtle, malignant, the utter incarnation of evil. The thought that a Titanic personality like this is striving perpetually to break down the characters we build with such pain and struggle is a solemn one, indeed.

Behold the grand old victim of this fiendish malignity; object of this supernal trial; vicarious offering to the list of the world's heroes, passing across the stage in solemn dignity; scraping his boils with a broken piece of pottery; sitting down to rest his aching bones upon a heap of ashes, but calm, serene, composed! It is, indeed, a sight to thrill the hearts of men and angels. Stripped of his property; cast down from his high estate; deserted by friends and maligned by the wife of his bosom, he stands like a rock in an ocean of sorrows, immovable, impregnable, sublime! I would rather have seen the unconquerable Job upon his ash heap than Hannibal crossing the Alps, or Cæsar the Rubicon. It is a nobler sight than Demosthenes or Cicero in the agora or the forum. No other struggle is so sublime as a moral struggle; no victory so grand as a spiritual conquest.

If you look on the wrong or back side of a piece of tapestry, while it is being woven, it seems all wrong. There is apparently no plan to the work. All is confusion. Yet the weaver works according to a pattern that is plain to him, and at the end the beauty of it is revealed. So God works, as it were, from behind the scenes; we do not see the pattern in His mind. But we are foolish if we conclude there is no plan in His work. In due time all its beauty will be seen.

A Foolish Wife. In the whole great story nothing is more dramatic than the appearance of Job's wife. Wringing her hands she comes; beating her breast, tearing her hair, and uttering wild reproaches. Her shrill voice rises above the din of traffic. A crowd gathers around, to ridicule and enjoy. Blushing for shame and trembling with sorrow she utters that mad, immortal interrogation, "Dost thou still preserve thine integrity?" "I have seen something of this world, and there are but two kinds of women in it,those who take the strength out of a man and those who put it back," said the old Sahiba, in Rudyard Kipling's story "Kim."

Integrity. Of course Job preserved his integrity! It is the glory of all God-inspired manhood that it still preserves its integrity; through good report and evil report; prosperity and adversity; success and failure. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln still preserved their integrity, even when friends deserted and enemies stabbed them in the dark. "Chinese" Gordon preserved his integrity even when the savage Moslems stormed the walls of Khartoum. Joseph preserved his integrity, and so did Daniel, although assailed by temptations fierce as hell itself. "Integrity!" Sound, whole, unimpaired, unbroken manhood, womanhood, boyhood, girlhood! This is what God demands and expects of every one of us. "integer" is a complete person, or thing. Job was as whole a man in his temptation, and after it, as before. Trials reduce some men to fragments, as a stone does a gas lamp on a street corner. Troubles turn others into such tatterdemalions as a thaw makes of a snow man. How few of us came out of the terrible struggle-whole! There is a picture of a boy climbing over a fence and crying out exultantly, "He never touched me" —although a big dog on the ground has his mouth full of pantaloons! What the boy meant was-he never touched myself! He may, indeed, have torn my trousers, but the real me is as whole as a dollar! Many a boy and girl, many a man and woman, comes out of the conflict in tattered clothing, but with body and soul unbroken!

"Renounce God and die," said the foolish woman (trying to take more strength out of the man). Renounce God and you will die! It is like renouncing sunlight or air—the absolute conditions of existence. Imagine a kitten in a basket renouncing its mother's milk. Imagine a hollyhock in a garden renouncing the rain! Imagine a little boy in a street renouncing his father's hand! Love, hope, joy, peace (those soul essentials), can no more live without the presence of God in the heart than a tree can live without sap in its veins.

If I did not see God when I look at the world or into my own heart, I should be staggered, like a man who should look into a mirror and not see his face. No man could survive the shock.

There is a story of an American in Paris who had spent all his money and decided one evening to kill himself that night. While he was in his room, making ready for the act, a robber entered and tied him in his chair and left him there unable to carry out his design. The next morning the mail carrier arriving with the mail, unfastened him and handed him a letter. The letter announced that he had inherited a fortune through the death of a relative in America. That letter was already almost within his reach the night before when he was contemplating suicide. He was rich without being aware of it.

"What? Shall we receive good at the hands of God and shall we not receive evil"

All the noblest spirits of all the ages have also felt like that. "A man is born, not for prosperity, but to suffer for the benefit of others; like the noble rock-maple which all around our villages bleeds for the service of

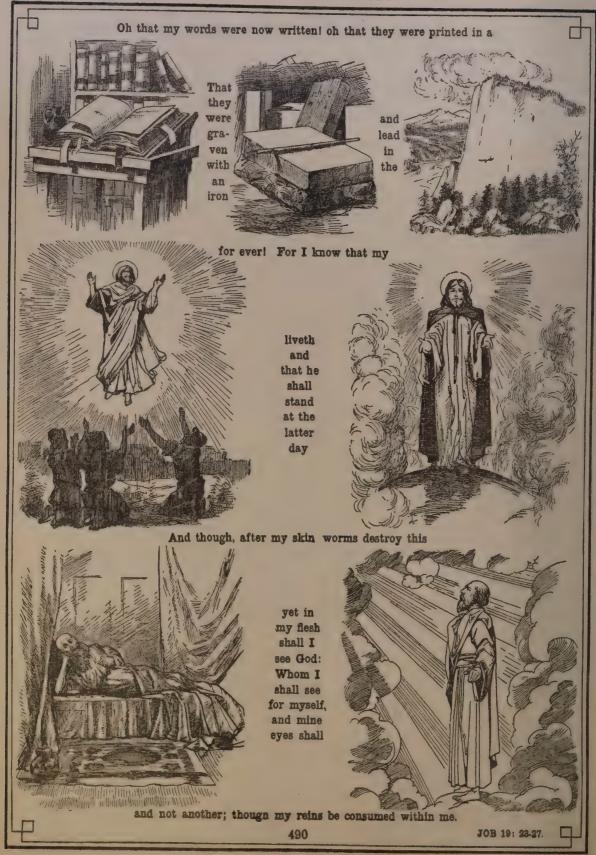
people," said Emerson; and Huxley has left behind him this noble personal testimony, "I cannot but think that he who finds a certain proportion of pain and evil inseparably woven up in the life of the very worms, will bear his own share with more courage and submission."

It is the greatest of all arts to expect troubles without anticipating them. We know that they must come, and yet we ought not to permit them to take us by surprise and bowl us over. You would think, to hear the average man and woman whimper and fret when the commonplace sorrows of life fall upon them, that they had never seen others suffer! It may not make the pain less to have been prepared for adversity, but it does take away the sting of surprise and astonishment. You know you have to take the bitter with the sweet; how then does it happen that you can not do so with quietness and submission? Why do you not meet trouble with the patience of Job: or with the heroism of a Huxley?

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever Gods there be,
For my unconquerable soul.
In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of Chance,
My head is bloody, but unbowed.
It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the Captain of my soul."

The leaders of the Roman republican party at the battle of Philippi, when they saw they were defeated, believed their cause at an end. Brutus and his friends slew themselves on the battlefield in despair. Yet shortly afterwards the tide turned in favor of liberty. They slew themselves too soon. So all err who give way to despair and fail to have patience until a favorable change comes.

Practical Truths. 1. There is an Adversary. The more we realize that the better. We get ready for the trial when we know that it is to be one. 2. Job's wife thought his religion had proved to be useless. She had the heart of a heathen. 3. It is a sad thing to misjudge God. We should try to be fair with men, and much more with God. To misinterpret the kindness of God grieves Him. 4. "Sin is not only vile, but foolish; it offends against our true interests as well as against God's honor." 5. Times of adversity are those which prove who are and who are not our real friends. How precious is sympathy and good counsel at such times. 6. Paradoxes lie all through the New Testament; and one may walk on them, like stepping-stones, from side to side. Sorrow is joy. Death is life. Down is up. Weakness is strength. Loss is gain. Defeat is victory. The world's mightiest men, the very monarchs of its joy, are they who died deaths daily.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS JOB 19:23-27.

Prayer: Our Father, May we ever live as in the presence of the life eternal. May our faith in immortality be as a light upon our pathway. Help us so to live now as to come in peace to the end of our days and unto the Heavenly City. In the name of Christ. Amen.

These through fiery trials trod;
These from great affliction came;
Now before the throne of God
Seal'd with His Almighty Name,
Clad in raiment pure and white,
Through their dear Redeemer's might.
—Montgomery.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1520. Place, the Land of Uz. Persons, Job and his friends.

Scripture Setting: Study of Immortality. Through transition, Gen. 5:24. By the chariot of fire, 2 Kings 2:11. In God's presence, Psa. 16:10. Assurance of, Psa. 23:6. God receives soul, Psa. 49:15. Man's spirit goes upward, Eccl. 3:21. Returns to God, Eccl. 12:7. Of life and death, Dan. 12:2, 3. Eternal life, Matt. 25:46. God of the living, Mark 12:26. Life through Christ, John 3:14, 16, 36. Gift of Christ, John 10:28.

Life and Conduct Setting: "As surely as that Christ, our Redeemer, is risen from death by His power and is entered into glory, so surely will all who believe in Him rise again to enternal life by His Divine power. The Messiah is in such wise the Living One, yea more, the Life itself, in that He proves Himself to be the Living One by making us alive. This is the best comfort in the extremity of death, that as Christ rose again from the dead, therefore we shall arise with Him."—Starke.

A BLESSED HOPE.

At the beginning of this great tragedy we behold a man tormented with physical pain and overwhelmed with the sense of financial loss. But his experience widens and deepens as the full consciousness of what he has to endure is gradually disclosed. He begs for help, but no one hears; he invokes justice, but it is everywhere denied; he finds himself despised and stripped of his glory; hope has been plucked up like a tree; wrath has been kindled against him; his enemies have encamped upon his trail; his acquaintances are strangers; his kinsfolk have failed him; his familiar friends have passed him by; his servants refuse to answer when he calls, and the wife of his bosom, together with his children, repudiate his affection and scorn his

Anguish. The misery of man becomes at times complete. His agony can not be exaggerated. Even Shakespeare could not portray the grief of Lear in all its unconsolable wretchedness. People actually suffer up to a pitch of intensity which no extra amount of pain could increase. And to this point Job had come. He could not express himself, for such grief is inarticulate. He could only mean and wish in vain that the awful terment could be adequately described.

"Oh! if my feelings could be uttered.
"Oh! if they could be written in a book.

"Oh! that with an iron pen and leaden hammer they could be carved upon a rock!"

Thank God, that such grief is sometimes cured by reaction. The advancing tide of the ocean even, can only go so high, then breaks and ebbs. And so sorrow (even oceanic sorrow) is broken by its own impotency. Upon the heels of his despairing out-

burst there follows a sudden calm; a wonderful peace, an uplifting hope. Up from the depths of his spirit arose a sublime conviction. A star appeared suddenly above the dark horizon. He felt a strange security.

Hope. "In spite of all, I feel (I know) that there is salvation from this sorrow! There must be somewhere a Divine Spirit of love and consolation. It is inconceivable that existence should form an unmitigable curse. There is; there must be; it is necessary that there should be, a great and powerful Saviour. I know that my Redeemer liveth! You need not ask me how I know! I know!

"I know that He will come to earth and mingle among men, bearing their sorrows; enduring their griefs."

"I know that death does not end all; but that, emerging from this body, my soul like the life of a seed, shall arise in a new and exalted state, in which I shall be able to recognize this Divine being."

"I know that I shall see Him for myself! His being and nature shall not be revealed to me second-hand! I shall not behold Him through a stranger's eye, but through mine own!"

That many people besides Job have had convictions as profound as these, there is not any room to doubt. The pages of the world's literature abound with narratives of the sublime revelations that have come to great souls; of the certainty of eternal life, eternal consolation and eternal justice!

"I believe with all my soul; I feel, I know with certainty that, dying, I shall be happy. I shall enter a world more real!" exclaimed Tolstoi on his eightieth birthday.

At a dinner given to him in Paris, Victor

Hugo, in an impromptu address exclaimed with resistless conviction and eloquence: "When I go down to the grave, I can say I have finished my day's work; but I cannot say I have finished my life. My days will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight, to open on the dawn."

Faith. Why should we not believe these words of the great seers? To their testimony we lesser people ought to pin our faith, for they are men who speak as they are moved by the Holy Spirit. Theirs are souls which are strangely sensitive to the unseen universe. As the sensitive plant vibrates to the tread of the hoofs of horses entirely out of the sight or hearing of men, so their spirits are agitated by influences which average people do not feel at all. No greater folly can be committed than that of placing the testimony of the great "materialists" above that of these mysteriously sensitised beings. It is not to the man accustomed to examine and test the physical elements alone, that we should refer the problems of the spiritual world! We ought to pin our faith to the great experts of the spiritual universe, like the author of this book.

And so ought we to pin our faith to those ideas which exert the most powerful influence for good, like those in this sublime passage about the "living Redeemer." Multitudes of people are dominated by the cares and feelings which belong to the lower realms of man's existence. Can anything be stranger than their not seizing with insistent eagerness upon those that have made the world better? "Give me a great thought to rest my head and heart upon," said a dying philosopher. It is the great thought that we need!

High Ideals. There is another thing. We owe it to ourselves to govern our lives by the best and noblest thoughts and emotions which visit our own souls. We may not be inspired prophets, but we all are visited by great, as well as feeble thoughts. Why then is it that so many people govern their lives by the thoughts that come in the ebb tides, when the whole head is sick and the whole

heart faint? Instead of remaining under the dominion of the cynical or skeptical thoughts that came to him when crushed by the sense of his loss, Job put himself at beck and call of the mighty faith that welled up from the depth of his nature, in that supreme moment of victory. What we need is the hope inspired by those exalted moods! With such hopes burning in our hearts we can survive the loss of all things.

Before Alexander set out for Asia, he divided his kingdom among his friends. "What have you left for yourself, my lord?" asked Perdicas. "Hope," he replied. "If it is good enough for Alexander, it is good enough for Perdicas," said the young nobleman. It is good enough for any

No mother, sorrowing over the loss of a little child; no man, contemplating the wreck of his business; no ambitious youth, defeated and baffled in the attempt to realize his fondest dreams, could be cast down utterly with a hope like that of Job's illuminating the pathway over which he had to go.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

A bulbous root found in the hand of a mummy three thousand years old, when placed in the earth grew and blossomed into a beautiful flower. If the life of a root can be thus retained in darkness for so long a period, does it not well nigh demonstrate the persistence of the spirit of man?

A certain lord had, according to the old custom, a fool to make jests for him. He gave him a staff and bade him keep it till he met a greater fool than and bade him keep it till he met a greater fool than himself. Some years later, the lord became ill, and seemed likely to die. The fool visited him, and his master said, "I must shortly leave you." "Where are you going?" asked the fool. "Into another world." "And when will you return? within a month?" "No." "Within a year?" "No." "When then?" "Never." "Never? And what provision have you made for entertainment where you are going?" "None at all." "None at all?" cried the fool. "Here then take my staff for with oried the fool. "Here, then, take my staff, for with all my folly, I am not guilty of such folly as this."

Practical Truths. 1. A vivid faith in Heaven is

one of the most practical forces for right living. "He who has no hope of immortality but half lives." 2. Belief in another life is the greatest consolation in the midst of the trials of this. 3. There is nothing more reasonable than the conviction that God does not build up merely to tear down. 5. We can keep the faith of eternal life real to us by daily giving it a place in our thoughts. 6. We must strive by all means, by prayer, by study of God's Word, by entertaining sound and wise ideas, to keep before us the reality of Heaven.

Dr. CHAS. F. Goss.

JOB'S RESTORATION

Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his



and all they
that had
been of his
acquaintance before,
and did



bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and



him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece



and every one an earring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand



493

and a thousand she

He had also

JOB XLII: 11-13.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS JOB 42:1-13.

Prayer: Our Father, Bring us, we beseech Thee, through all our distresses, even as Thy servant Job came through darkness again into the light. In the name of Christ. Amen.

"E'en the hour that darkest seemeth Will His changeless goodness prove; From the gloom His brightness streameth, God is wisdom! God is love!"

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1520. Place, the Land of Uz. Persons, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and

Zophar.

Scripture Setting: Study of Prayer for Others. Abraham for Sodom, Gen. 18:23-32. For Abimelech, 20:17, 18. Abraham's servant for his master, Gen. 24:12. Jacob for his children, Gen. 49. Moses for Israel, Num. 16:20-23. For Miriam, Num. 12:13-15. David for Israel, 2 Sam. 24:17. Solomon for Israel, 1 Kings 8:29-53. Syro-phenician woman for daughter, Matt. 15:22. Disciples for Peter's wife's mother, Luke 4:38, 39. Parents for lunatic son, Matt. 17:15. Paul for the church, Acts 20:32. Paul for Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. 1:16, 18. For Paul by the

churches, Acts 14:26; 15:40. Centurion for servant, Luke 7:3. Christ for His disciples, John 17:13-24. Life and Conduct Setting: "The inward restora-

Life and Conduct Setting: "The inward restoration of Job; his deliverance from the errors which had beclouded his heart and his knowledge, and his penitent submission under God's righteousness and gracious will, is immediately followed by his outward restoration and redemption. This comes to pass in immediate connection with the sharp rebuke which God visits upon Job's friends because of their unreasonably harsh condemnation of him, and also in connection with the brotherly prayer which Job offers in their behalf, thus heaping coals of fire on their heads."—Lange.

HOW A PRAYER WORKED WONDERS.

Turning Point. In every human life there are pivotal points upon which its destinies turn as on a hinge. One man's turned, for example, upon a conversation. Perhaps it was the thoughtful advice of a friend; perhaps it was the malignant sneer of an enemy; possibly it was an accidental word overheard on the street. At any rate, upon it his whole career turned around. From a bad man he became a good one; or from a good, a bad one. Another man's turns upon an accident; another, upon an incident; another, upon a chance acquaintance. Nothing seems more incredible or unreasonable than the power of mere trifles to deflect the careers of men to Heaven or hell; but no fact is more demonstrable and no experience more real.

Job's destiny turned upon a prayer. All that he had endured was impotent to restore him to his right mind or lead him into the right path, until at last he prayed! That prayer proved revolutionary in its effect. A skeptic would not have believed it. "What difference can a prayer make with him?" a skeptic would have asked. will be just the same after he prays as before." But he was not! No sooner had all the pent up feelings of his burdened soul poured out, than a great change came over him. Up to that moment his thoughts and hopes and purposes had, as it were, been carrying a ball and chain upon their feet. After that moment they were freed! His chains fell off. The door of his prison was opened. He passed into liberty.

The Change. Upon a thousand different kinds of prayers the destinies of men have

turned. One man has to pray a prayer of penitence before his captivity is turned. Another must offer a prayer of self-surren-Another of forgiveness, another of aspiration. Job had to offer a prayer for the men who tortured his spirit with their criticisms and confused his thoughts with their false philosophies. He had tried in every other way to be rid of them and, at last, he prays. He prayed for their help and enlightenment, and suddenly a great change came over his own thoughts and feelings. He felt a new kindness and a new peace. Nor did the change confine itself to his interior life, but was reflected in the outer world. Everything began to "come his way." He could not understand it. It seemed to him, as to so many, no doubt, impossible that one little prayer could extricate a man from so many troubles and bring about so many wonderful and happy changes. But it was true.

Prosperity Returns. Yes, everything began to "come his way." His brothers and sisters, who had deserted him in his sorrow, were seen wending their ways toward the place where he sat in the ashes. Even those casual acquaintances who had turned up their noses at him in his adversity called to wish him well. They brought him food to eat; they expressed their sympathy with him in his troubles; they loaned and they gave him Once more his crops made their money. Again he heard the welcome evigood. dences of cattle in his fields. Fourteen thousand sheep; six thousand camels; a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses came lowing and bleating around him. Above all,

it fairly rained children and little grandchildren, and the old man's heart was full of

The Seed and The Harvest. Do not let any one persuade you that these events were too great to be the consequences of one little prayer. No events are too great to be the consequences of the least causes! A loud shout from the lips of a mountain climber in the Alps has started an avalanche, which destroyed a village. The pressure of a man's thumb upon an electric button has set in motion the machinery of national expositions thousands of miles away. A single sentence flashed through the telegraph wires across a continent has depreciated the value of stocks, into the millions. A wireless message for help shot out into the darkness of night has summoned a fleet to the help of a sinking vessel. The shot of a cannon per-cipitated a civil war. The decision of a man to cross a little river in Italy established a Roman empire. The sound of a hammer on the door of a cathedral brought forth a reformation.

When the books are opened at the last great day, the assembled multitudes are certain to hear stories of the efficacy of single prayers, that will fill the universe with wonder. Some feeble petition, uttered centuries ago by the lips of an obscure man or woman, will be proven to have been the source of immeasurable revolutions in the thoughts and feelings of the world. That prayer of Jesus on the cross, for example, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Who can establish the boundary lines of its influence? The effects which it produced are widening yet, and will until the heavens are old and the stars grow cold, and the leaves of the judgment book unfold.

Who knows how to measure the consequences of that prayer which (nobody can doubt) the mother of Moses put up to Heaven, when she launched the little boat which bore her baby to the feet of a royal princess! No, do not for one moment be disturbed by the sneers of the doubters of prayer. They laugh at us for our simplicity and ignorance. We pity them for theirs!

"You are hopelessly ignorant! I do not believe you know how many letters there are in the alphabet," exclaimed a teacher to a little boy. neither do you know how many letters there are in the post office," he replied.

We Christians may know but little about the great mysteries of life; but we cannot help but think that the skeptic knows much At any rate, we do not propose stupidly to lose the mighty possibility of influence opened to us by prayer. If it does no one else good when we pray, it does ourselves. Whatever effect his prayer for his friends had, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, it turned the captivity of Job.

Illustrations.

Alexander the Great visited the noted Greek phil-Alexander the Great visited the noted Great plan-osopher Diogenes and asked him if there was any-thing he could do for him. The abrupt reply was, "I want nothing but that you should stand from between me and the sun." Doubts, fears, unbe-

lieving persons, sins, get between us and the light, and we need to get these out of the way.

When George Stephenson, inventor of the railway engine, was on a visit to Sir Robert Peel, in company with some other celebrities, they observed a railway train dashing along. "Now," said Stephenson, turning to one of his friends, "I have a poser for you. Can you tell what is the power that is driving that train?" "Well," his friend began, "I suppose it is one of your big engines." "But what drives the engines?" "Oh, very likely a canny Newcastle driver." "What do you say to the light of the sun?" "How can that be?" "It is nothing else," replied Stephenson, "it is light bottled up in the earth for tens of thousands of years, light absorbed by plants and vegetables being necessary for the condensation of carbon during the process of their growth, if it be not carbon in another form; and now, after being buried in the earth for long ages in fields of coal, that latent light is again brought forth and liberated—made to work, as in that locomotive, for great human purposes."

So it is light from God that moves human life in right directions. It was light that cheered Job

after all his troubles.

When John Knox was dying, he was asked if he had "hope." He was unable to speak but he raised his finger and pointed upwards. It is hope that carries us through all our troubles. Job had been in the depths and now he was coming into the light. During the worst he had been supported by hope

that the issue of all his tribulations would be good.

Practical Truths. 1. Often friends speak ungently and unfeelingly because they do not understand. 2. The better and loftier view of the problems of life comes after passing through lower and ignobler views. A better understanding of great problems comes by experience. 3. Presenting any interest before God in prayer is certain to give us a better view of it and to put us into a different attitude toward it. 4. To pray for people is to learn to take a new interest in them and to see them in a new light. 5. Job's experiences and their issue in his restored happiness on earth contradict the ofttimes repeated error that religion is chiefly for a future life. His godliness triumphed in the present It is gross injustice to religion, gross misrepresentation, to defer its benefits to the hereafter.

DR. CHAS. F. GOSS.

THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.



not
in the
counsel
of the
ungodly

nor

Blessed is the man that



in the way of sinners, nor



in the seat of the scornful: But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he



day and night.

And he shall be like a



planted by the rivers of water, that bring. eth forth



in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the



which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the



nor sinners in the



of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

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PSA. 1: 1-6.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS THE FIRST PSALM.

Prayer: Our Father, We desire greatly that we may be in all things obedient, that we may receive the blessing of the righteous and live worthily for Thy glory. In the name of Christ. Amen.

He shall be like a tree that stands Near planted by a river, That in his season yields his fruit And his leaf fadeth never.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, about 1052 B. C. Author, David. Place of composition unknown, but this Psalm was probably written in Jerusalem.

Scripture Setting: The Righteous Contrasted with the Wicked. Tested and hated, Psa. 11:5. Protected and afflicted, Psa. 32:10. Kept and cut off, Psa. 37:17-22. Prosperity of each, Psa. 73:1-28. A chain of contrasts, Prov. 10-15; 21; 22; 28. Rewards, Rom. 2:7-10. With and without hope, 1 Pet. 18. Children of God and Devil, 1 John 3.

Life and Conduct Setting: "Blessed'—see how

this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, even

as did the Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount! The word 'blessed' is a very expressive one. The original word is plural. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which shall rest upon the man whom God hath justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness he shall enjoy. May the like benediction rest on us!''—Spurgeon.

"As the book of the Canticles is called the Song of Songs because it is the most excellent, so this Psalm may not unfitly be entitled the Psalm of Psalms, for it contains the very pith and essence of Christianity.''—Thomas Watson.

GRANDFATHER'S APPLE TREE.

Commenting on this wonderful psalm is like trying to improve a lily with a coat of paint and varnish. When a group of beholders watch the sun go down, the fool expatiates but the philosopher is silent. And yet, in every art gallery and library there must be an interpreter. Not every one possesses insight, penetrative power, ability to comprehend, and those who do must therefore teach. The thing to be careful of, is, blowing one's own thoughts upon transparent loveliness like this and letting it freeze like your breath on a widow pane, so that neither yourself nor anybody else can see through it.

There is a legend in the Orient that tells of a marvelous tree. On it there grew apples of gold and bells of silver. When a breeze arose and moved the branches a shower of these apples fell and the bells rang sweetly. Pure religion makes the right-eous bear golden fruits, and the harvesting is accompanied by great joy.

Blessedness. We cannot go astray if we begin by saying that there is such a thing as "blessedness." The beatitudes of life are real. More ways than one are known to put the soul in a beatific state. Blessed is the man who is loved by a good woman. Blessed are the parents who have dear and obedient children. Blessed is the little child which grows up in a home where love abides. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Blessed are the pure in heart; the merciful; the mourners; the seekers after God; etc., almost ad infinitum. Do not doubt this for a moment. You may yourself be miserable, unhappy and dissatisfied. It may appear to you that every one in the world is wretched and rebellious. But you are wrong! There are millions who are in a state of mental

peace: of blessedness. They have simply found the path which you have missed.

Wickedness. No one, in the whole long history of the human race, has found blessedness by walking in the counsel of the ungodly nor standing in the way of sinners, nor sitting in the seat of the scornful! You might as well expect to find partridges, if you were a hunter, by walking down a city street: or an alms, if you were a beggar, by standing on the north pole; or a dinner, if you were hungry, by sitting on a camp stool Wickedness, sinfulness, and in a desert. scornfulness cannot produce blessedness any more than fire, acid and dynamite can produce flowers and fruit. They have wheir inalienable characteristics, which can no more be separated from them than qualities from substances, as for example: acid from a lemon, or bitterness from gall. They agitate the soul and drive men along as wind does chaff. Look sharply at a crowd of wicked people, old or young, and see. They are restless, uneasy, impatient, rampant and perturbed. They wander about the house, the town, the world. I have seen an autumn wind sweep down a street, gather up the leaves and send them whirling before it, as a victorious regiment puts its enemies to flight. And in a rout like this sin sweeps its victims along a troubled pathway to the grave.

Righteousness. But the righteous are not so! They are like trees planted by the streams of water, bringing forth unwithering leaves and incorruptible fruit. Is there anything else in the world more like a good man than a tree? No wonder that we love those beautiful emanations of the Divine Spirit of life! "Under the shade of a tree

Gotama was born; under the shade of a tree he overcame the god of the world and the fear of death. Under the shade of a tree he preached his first sermon clothed in a shroud; under the shade of a tree he died. Between men and trees there is a mysterious kinship. Our Saviour loved to compare men to trees. "Like them," he said, "we must bear fruit." Now and then, we have to be patient with and cultivate them as the gardner does the tree, and give them a chance. But, at last, they must yield fruit or go down under the axe. Like a grand and noble tree with its roots amidst the living springs of water stands a true man, yielding year by year his never-failing crops.

Fruitfulness. In the rear of my grandfather's house stood a magnificent old, sweet harvest apple tree, which became my earliest symbol of bountifulness. I never knew it to fail of a crop; nor have I ever seen such apples since. We little people used fairly to live among its wide-spreading branches. From our various points of advantage we watched each apple as it slowly ripened in the sun and turned to gold. In the mornings we scrambled out of bed and rushed halfdressed to see if any of them had fallen to the ground. To munch one of them on the road to the swimming pool or eat it cut up in a bowl of milk was bliss. Our faith in the tree was boundless. We should as soon have expected to look up in the sky and see no stars; into the old well and see no water; into our mother's face and see no smiles, as into the branches of that old, sweet harvest tree and see no apples!

Then, as our comprehension of life deepened, the tree became a symbol of the old grandfather. He, too, bore fruit! To him also, we could go with perfect assurance of finding a crop! No more than the old apple tree did he refuse us a smile, a kindly word, a helping hand, a loving look. Before he died he all but impoverished himself by his gifts to his children. Is it not blessedness to live like that?

Of course, not every human life can be so very bountiful in fruit as those of the "great hearts" of history; but we must never forget that the mission of some men, like that of

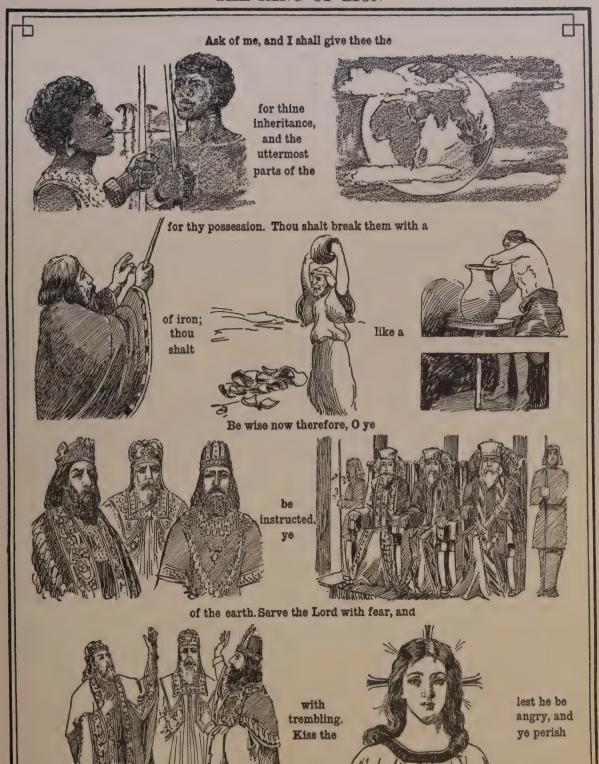
some of our trees, may be the bearing of only nuts, and even leaves.

We knew of a stranger who built a costly house in a beautiful suburb where the residents in general cultivated and highly prized their trees. The whole place was like a park. But this man prepared for the building of his home by cutting away all the trees on his grounds in order to have an open lawn. After the house was finished, he changed his mind and went to live elsewhere. Then he wished to sell the property in which he had invested much money. But those who came to inspect it, while they admired the house, were disappointed at the absence of trees, and declined to buy. The property remained unsold for several years, until other trees had time to grow.

Generousness. There is a charming tradition in China of a tree in the cemetery where the body of Confucius lies buried, any one of whose leaves, laid upon a difficult passage in his writing, will shed a mysterious interpretative light, by means of which its meaning may be known. Such a tree as that would not be worthless even though it never bore an apple, a peach, or a nut! Let's try to shed our leaves and fruit; not be like one of those trees which have to be clubbed before you can get anything from it, fit to And do not be like the maple tree, whose hard bark has to be bored into to make the sap run! Shake your own boughs! Exude your own sap! Be generous, be bountiful! Keep on bearing fruit-no matter who gets it and no matter who appreciates it. Say to the world—here is my gift to the race. Take it, or leave it. My mission it to produce it.

Practical Truths. 1. It is not enough to avoid evil and to keep separate from bad companions. This Psalm presents a positive side. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." Observe the "don'ts," at the same time follow the "dos." Positive goodness should be our delight. 2. There are stages in wrong-doing. There is a beginning time and act. First the sinner merely walks by. Then he stops, stands. Presently he is seated among the scornful. 3. It is pleasant to realize that God has knowledge of our ways, if we are true and loyal. He who does right is not alone, is not unobserved. God sees and approves. 4. Religion does not hinder happiness, but furthers it. The Bible and Christian experience prove that real and abiding welfare and joy come alone through well-doing. 5. There is a mocking play on the saying, "Be good and you will be happy," which asserts, "Be good and you will be lonely." That is false. It is sin that is lonely. Sin separates the best friends.

DE. CHAS. F. GOSS.



from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. PSA. II: 8-12.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 2:7-12.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, The world is Thine, for Thou madest it; and I am Thine, for Thou gavest me being, and that I might usefully live here and afterwards live forever, Thou wast born in a manger and didst die upon the cross. I come to Thee to offer my allegiance and service, praying that the kings of earth and princes of the people may all bow to Thee, Thou Prince of Peace and King of kings. Amen.

Jesus lives, O blessed words, King of kings, and Lord of lords! Lift the cross and sheathe the swords, Jesus lives!

See, he breaks the prison wall, Throws aside the dreadful pall, Conquers death and once for all, Jesus lives!

-Rev. John R. Colgan.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: An ancient Hebrew song of royalty, prophetic in teaching. A poem of four stanzas of three verses each, the lesson including only the last two stanzas. Written undoubtedly by David, and so credited in Acts 4:25, 26. Quoted with chapter number in Acts 13:33. See other quotations, Heb. 1:5, 5:5. The one place mentioned (verse 6) refers to Jerusalem. Three speakers, Jehovah, the Messiah, and the Psalmist.

ers, Jehovah, the Messiah, and the Psalmist.

Scripture Setting: Steps to the Throne. Making a way for the King. Isa. 40:3-10. The missionary commission. Matt. 28:16-20. True nature of idols. Isa. 44:9-20. The wrath of royalty. Rev. 6:15-17. Allegiance of earthly kings. Isa. 60:1-12. Christ's coronation. Rev. 14:14-20.

Life and Conduct Setting: This passage sets forth the opposing powers in the age-long struggle for the world-wide kingdom. 1. Christ's right as universal King rests on His work as Creator, His love as Redeemer, and His life as a perfect example. 2. Those subjects alone are worthy of prayer which embrace humanity and touch eternity. 3. The rule of the kingdom is service—the greatest is greatest in service. 4. National idols to be broken are the goddess of pleasure, the calf of gold, and the blindfolded god of unbelief. 5. That nation is most Christian which most fully exhibits the Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood.

THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

The Royal Decree Published. Only in the history and character of Christ can we find a sufficient explanation for the prophetic language of this Psalm. Its imagery of forces fiercely contending reflects the war-like events of David's reign. The king was forced to assert himself against many plotting foes. Following an ancient royal custom Christ is represented as inaugurating His reign by proclaiming the fundamental law upon which His government rests-His Divine Sonship. Christ's relation as Son of God gives Him the right to universal dominion. Historically the Catholic faith has rested its claim upon the authority of the church, while the Protestant faith has rested upon the authority of the Bible. It would seem here that the true foundation is the personality of Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Prayer and Missions. "Ask of me and I will give thee the nations." When they complained to the Marquis of Salisbury about his colonial policies he answered their little minds by saying, "Gentlemen, you need to study larger maps." Christ thought in the terms of continents and taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth." The purpose of prayer is not to drag God down to our narrow plans and feeble policies, but to lift us up to God's imperial and ageless purpose. Men can do nothing so far-reaching as to pray, for prayer links each separate life to all other life, both human and Divine. A

man cannot remain selfish and provincial if he truly prays. Some men pray only when driven into a corner, and then with a spirit of pessimism they exclaim, "There is nothing else left to do but pray!" That is the lowest view of prayer. This lesson puts prayer before us as the first privilege. It calls for a church-wide enlistment for world-wide evangelism. It is the imperial view. Through prayer we are led to the mountain top of the Great Commission where the imperial mind of our Lord is revealed in four directions,—to boundless space, "Go ye into all the world," to boundless need, "to every creature," to boundless truth, "all things which I have commanded you," to boundless time, "I will be with you alway."

Thy Possessions—the Uttermost Parts of the Earth. How true is it that those nations which have withstood Christ have been broken with a rod of iron, and dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. Herod and Pilate passed, Rome and Greece perished, but Christ and His Kingdom live. Christianity is more than a hope that lingers around Joseph's rock-hewn tomb; it is a living, pervasive, conquering force.

Ulhern, the historian, says, "Never in the whole course of human history have two such unequal powers stood opposed to each other as ancient heathenism and early Christianity, the Christian church and the Roman state, apparently the weakest of forces confronting the strongest." Yet follow Christianity's growing force. In 300 years Paul's epistles were the Magna Charta of the

Roman empire; in a thousand years there were 50,000,000 Christians; in 1,500 years there were 100,000,000; in 1,800 years there were 200,000,000; and in the twentieth century there are 400,000,000. In fact in the year of our Lord 1910 there were 800,000,000 people living under Christian government. This is the testimony of history. Christ is possessing His own.

The Iron Scepter. He who wept over Jerusalem and prayed for His enemies spoke also the austerest words man ever heard as He pictured the doom of His enemies. He was walking the very ground where He saw in anticipation a century later the Tenth Roman legion encamped. In that most terrible siege on record thousands died from the horrors of famine; 97,000 of the Jews were taken prisoners; and 1,100,000 perished. For planting that central cross and shouting "His blood be upon us and upon our children" Jerusalem saw later the ground so thickly planted with crosses bearing crucified Jews that there was no more room.

The idols of the heathen are rapidly being shattered in our day. Our God is a jealous God who will have no other gods before Him. At the Laymen's Missionary Congress in Chicago a missionary declared that in northern China there are great stretches where the vast temples of heathendom are being converted into schools. The gods of the temple are sometimes piled together into some little room, where they are kept for a year or two until the people forget; then they are burned or cast into the sea. The idols of the heathen are to be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. The overthrow of idolatry is to be complete.

An Ideal Reign. After Jehovah and Messiah both have spoken David himself utters the concluding words of this Psalm. He calls upon rulers in general to serve with godly fear. One is reminded of David's last words as he looks backward on his own reign, and forward to Solomon's:

"One that ruleth over men righteously, That ruleth in the fear of God."

These two ideas, justice to men, reverence to God, not only guided David in the duties of his realm, but were deemed worthy to be handed down to other kings as changeless principles.

Victoria, it is said, believed her family history could be traced back to David's royal line. When, in 1837, she was crowned at Westminster Abbey the young girl was instructed to remain seated while all others stood during the singing of the halleluiah chorus of the Messiah. But her religious feelings gained the ascendency over her regard for court decorum, and she fell upon her knees before her Christ, her young face diffused with tears. It was a favorable omen of her long and glorious reign. She never forgot that she was "Victoria by the grace of God."

The Gospel of Reconciliation. In ancient

times princes were kissed in token of homage. When Samuel the prophet anointed Saul as Israel's future king he kissed him as a sign that Jehovah had made him ruler (1 Sam. 10:1). It behooves all, says David, to kiss the Son, lest by His anger ye perish. It was considered an unpardonable offense not to pay the full respect due to royalty.

When Xerxes passed over the bridge of the Hellespont the whole distance was strewn with branches, while the burning of rare perfumes filled the air. When Alexander entered Babylon they scattered flowers. When Queen Elizabeth came to a miry place in the road young Walter Raleigh took off his new and costly mantle and spread it on the ground to protect her feet. Christ had His day of triumph as He entered Jerusalem amid the song of children and the spreading of palm branches. Nor did Jesus silence them. If these held their peace the very stones would cry out, He declared.

The public acknowledgment of Christ as Sovereign in the spiritual realm is the immediate duty of every man. To neglect or to refuse is fraught with greatest peril.

When the emperor Justinian II entered Constantinople in 710 he was required to recognize the temporal power of the pope, Constantine I, by kissing his toe. Later the popes wore a slipper with a cross which was to be kissed. In recent years Protestants who wished an audience were required only to slightly bend the knee. But Christ, the true and only vice-gerent of God, has never changed the one clear way of reconciliation with the Father. It is the way of a full, personal, spiritual allegiance to Christ as Son of God.

If Jesus Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say,
That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
And to Him will I cleave alway.

But if Jesus Christ is God,
And the only God, I swear
I will follow Him through Heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, the air.

—B. W. Gilder.

Quiz and Study. What was the meaning of Christ's answer to Pilate's question, "Art Thou a King?" 2. What are four national obstacles to making Christ King? 3. In what three realms corresponding to the three languages nailed to the cross may Christ be my King? 4. By what means does Christ inspire and compel loyalty to His Kingdom?

Challenge Text: "And He shall speak — unto the heathen; and His — shall be from — even to —, and from the — even to the ends of the —." Zech. 9: (?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. The human manifestation of Jesus as Son of David does not preclude His everlasting Sonship. 2. The foundation stones of Christ's throne were cemented by His own blood. 3. Rebellion against established government is worthy of death. There is something in God to fear. 4. The miracle of modern missions reveals Christianity as a virile, conquering force.

REV. THOS. B. ROBERTS.

The



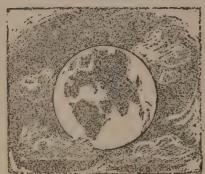
declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto



uttereth speech, and , night unto



sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the



and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the



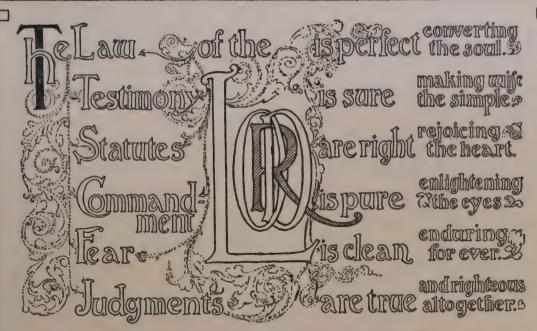
Which is as a bridegroom



of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to



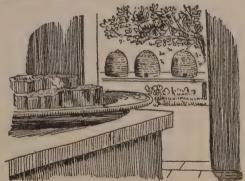
His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.



More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine



sweeter also than honey and the



Moreover by them is thy



warned: and in keeping of them there is great



PSA. XIX: 7-11.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 19:1-11.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, my Teacher, I long to know Thee, who art the Way, the Truth and the Life. Lead me as Thou didst lead the wise men of old, by the light of Thy star, and the prophecies of Thy Word. I would search for truth as the bee searches for nectar; lead me to Thy Book, which is sweeter than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. I would dig after nuggets of truth as the miner delves for nuggets of gold; lead me to Thy precepts which are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. Teach me all I can learn while I live, and teach me the rest in Heaven. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord; In every star Thy wisdom shines; But when our eyes behold Thy Word, We read Thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light, And nights and days Thy power confess, But the blest volume Thou has writ Reveals Thy justice and Thy grace. -Isaac Watts.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: A nature piece by David. Time, his early manhood. Like Psalm 119 it extols God's law, giving to it various epithets. Verses 1-6 reveal God through nature, verses 7-11 reveal Him through revelation.

Scripture Setting: The Seeker After Truth. Wonders of nature, Job 38:19-38. Natural and spiritual wisdom, 1 Cor. 2:6-16. Led by star and prophecy, Matt. 2:1-10. The heavens great but man greater, Psa. 8:1-5. Value of Bible study, 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Psa. 119:1-8. Unbounded knowledge, Psa. 139:1-12.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage gives us the signposts of religion, natural and revealed, on life's journey. 1. The regular appearances of the

sun by day and the moon by night teach us the unfailing faithfulness of God. 2. Even the blind feel the warmth of the sun, and the ignorant are helped by reading God's Word. 3. The books of nature and revelation claim the same Divine Author. They should be used to interpret each other. 4. Everything visible and material is a symbol of something invisible and eternal. 5. Arguing from the less to the greater the seed supplied the sparrow assures me I shall not lack; and the Hand that guides the planets with precision will guide my steps aright. 6. Faith need not wait on scientific demonstrations. The pure in heart may see God without mastering the laws of optics.

THE DIVINE AUTHOR'S TWO VOLUMES, NATURE AND REVELATION.

The Point of Contact. It was evening. A shepherd lad lay stretched upon the green slope overlooking Bethlehem. He gazed long into the starry depths where Orion marched with his jeweled sword. He studied the glowing Sirius, the Dog-star, and watched Arcturus, of whom Job had written ages before. With his keen shepherd eyes used to long distances he tries to compute the distance to the changeless North star. To the young David with his poetic nature there came a mighty sense of vastness, a suggestion of infinite distance, and from his lips there escapes an exclamation deeply religious, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

Day Unto Day Uttereth Speech. We are all born with a thirst to know. The baby in the cradle wakens one morning to see a bright spot on the nursery wall he has never seen before. He is outgrowing his cradle. Another morning he catches sight of the bright red flowers in the garden. He is outgrowing the walls of his nursery. Another morning he is in the garden but sees beyond the garden wall a vast world carpeted with turf, and canopied with blue. This young explorer has outgrown his garden. When you have taught him a little of the geography of earth and the astronomy of heaven his imagination will expand beyond these confines. He asks, "Father, Mother, what make him a believer or an infidel. It is more natural for him to believe. For the infant mind is born with a sense of infinity, and the baby soul is haloed with the gleam of eternity.

The Glory of the Heavens. No star-charts of scientific astronomy are needed to feel the vastness of the universe. "Their line is gone out through all the earth." When David exclaimed,

"When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained. What is man that thou are mindful of him, Or the son of man that thou visitest him?"

he did not know the force of his own words as we know them now. We have become quite well acquainted with some of our neighbors who are twenty trillions of English miles out there in space. They are so far that this string of ciphers we make carries no real conception to the mind. Even if we state their distance in the terms of centuries required for a cannon ball to reach them from us we are dazed rather than enlightened. But borrowing a shaft of light that radiates from the sun as our yard stick, we may reckon that it will travel from the sun to the earth, a distance of 92 million of miles in eight minutes and seven seconds. But there are known stars so far from us that their light at this rate would not reach us lies beyond the stars?" The answer may in thousands of years. So great are some

facts that it is possible to know, but impossible to conceive them. The space of the stars awakens reverence and awe. "The undevout astronomer is mad." In the study of the firmament, the handiwork of God, we can find no adequate words to describe our wonder, so we borrow the Psalmist's:

"O Lord, how great are Thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all."

Man's Greater Glory. The computations of astronomy are wonderful. Yet greater are the mysteries of the human mind and eve. Not content with naming and numbering the host of heaven, man, the pigmy creature, determines their composition, approximates their weight, measures their vast distances, and photographs them when he cannot find them with the telescope. In this way in the last few months has Professor Hale discovered 60,000 new stars at Mount Wilson observatory. Think of all these worlds, but think of the tiny pupil of man's eve where all these 10,000 rays of light cross each other and give us a correct but inverted picture of the starry heavens. Think how the light falling from yonder star drops upon that delicate patchwork of nerves behind the eyeball and the human mind grasps and comprehends its significance. Man comes into this world with all the delicate organism of the eve attuned to see the stars and clambers up by thought and study to where he can think God's thoughts after Him.

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels Thou crownedst him with glory and honor."

How it ennobles and dignifies man's existence to remember that the Spirit of the living God deigns to enter the narrow recess of the human heart. This little earth is only a waif amid the greater planets, but be it remembered that God's only Son walked its vales and died upon one of its hills. That makes our little earth the moral center of the universe. And how glorious is the lot of man since God becomes his Friend and Brother.

The Glory of God's Written Revelation. Some things truly the heavens teach us with their wondrous lights and perfect mechanism. The stars tell us of their Creator,

"Forever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine."

They say that God is great, that He is wise, that He is good. But for the great lessons that reveal the full proportions of the Divine nature we must search beyond the skies, we must go to the Bible. Those whose eyes have appreciated most the beauties of nature—flower, bird, and star, have appreciated more the beauties of the Bible.

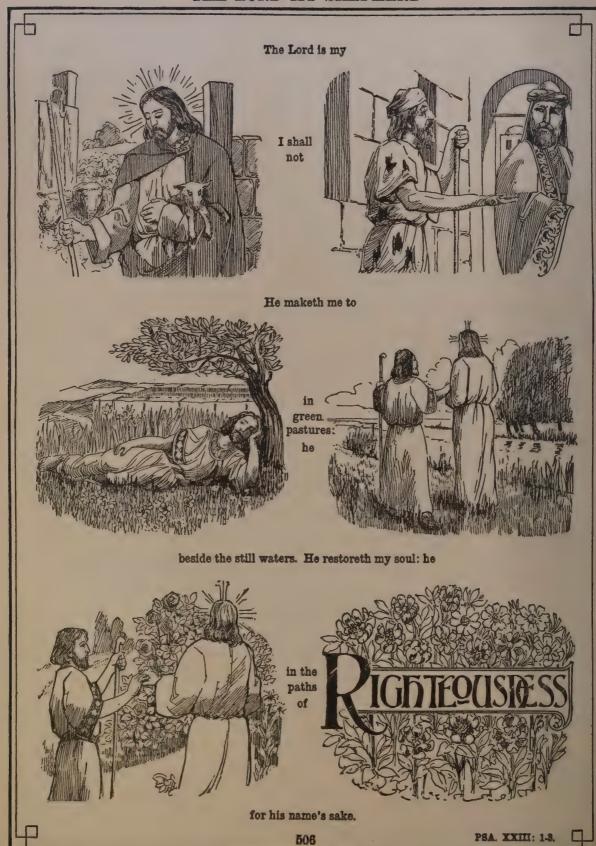
Coleridge says that the fairest flower he ever saw climbing around a poor man's window was not so beautiful in his eyes as the open Bible which was lying within the poor man's window. The literature of the Bible is the poor man's university. Lincoln read it in his youth by his fire of logs, long years after its spirit and style were distilled from his pen when he wrote his second inaugural or his Gettysburg speech. Bible teachings have transformed entire civilizations and converted cannibals into a great Christian power. Our own ancestors in the bogs of old England ate each other's flesh till Augustine took them the Bible. Luther's translation opened up the Bible to the plowboy, and awakened the intellectual life of Germany. This awakened the intellectual life of Germany. Book comes to us hoary with antiquity. Yet man's interest in the Bible is perennial. It is still to be reckoned among the best sellers. A few years ago the American revision of the New Testament was announced. It produced a literary sensation. The day it was published in New York it was telegraphed almost bodily from there to a great Chicago daily that it might arrive twenty-four hours in advance of steam. This was the longest message ever telegraphed, and it goes without saying, the very

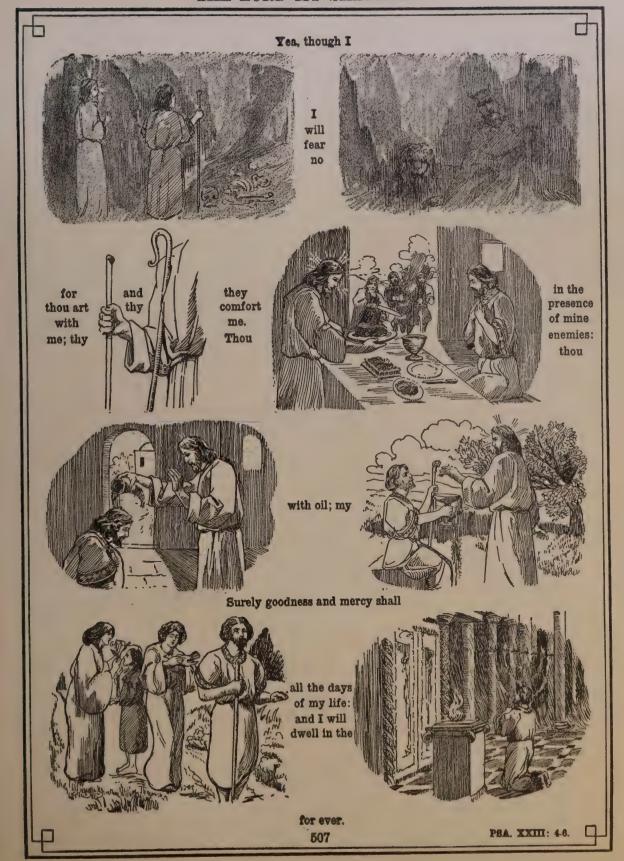
The Bible is not a treatise on astronomy, nor an abstract philosophy of life. It is a glad personal message of salvation sent of God. The great signpost at the parting of the ways that leads the weary traveller home is the sure sign of the cross. This is the cardinal message of the Bible.

Quiz and Study. 1. What special opportunities were given David to study nature? 2. Who was it dreamed that the sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down to him? 3. On what notable occasion did the sun stand still? 4. On what greater occasion was the sun's brightness eclipsed and the earth shaken? 5. Mention some of the rewards for observing God's law. 6. How many times does God's name appear in the ten commandments? In the beatitudes?

Challenge Text. Open Thou mine —, that I may — wondrous things out of Thy —. Psa. 119: (*). Practical Thoughts. 1. We are in the habit of giving each flower a sentimental language, and the rainbow is a bow that speaks forth a scripture promise. 2. Christ used natural objects in His teaching—the seed, the wind, the lily, the sparrow and the mother hen. 3. Some men through custom kiss the Bible in court but treat its warnings and promises with contempt. 4. The stars are the signal lights on our Heavenly Father's veranda hung by the angels to show us the way home. 5. When the earth gets between us and the sun we are in darkness, and when the pursuit of the world gets between us and our Father's purpose we are in spiritual darkness. REV. THOS. B. ROBERTS.

THE LORD MY SHEPHERD





THE SCRIPTURE LES SON IS PSALMS 23:1-6.

Prayer: Great Shepherd of the sheep, watch over this foolish and defenseless lamb. Once I loved to pick my path and I wandered far. I fed on poisonous herbs, I was torn in the thicket, till numb and bleeding, Thou didst find me, and bear me back. No wonder I know Thy voice, and love to follow Thee! Lead me in the paths of righteousness down to old age. Gather me at last into Thy presence where there shall be one fold, one Shepherd. Amen.

"An' de Shepherd go out in de darkness
Where de night was col' an' bleak,
An' dat lil' brack sheep He find it,
An' lay it agains' His cheek.
An' de hirelin' frown, 'O, Shepherd,
Don' bring dat sheep to me!'
But de Shepherd He smile, an' He hol' it close,
An'—dat lil' brack sheep—wuz—me!''

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: A pastoral poem describing in a beautiful metaphor God's loving care. Written by David, perhaps not long before he was called to walk through the shadowy valley of death. For the belief that Christ is the Lord here referred to as a shepherd see John 10:14; Heb. 13:20; 1 Fet. 2:25.

a shepherd see John 10:14; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25.
Scripture Setting: The Zion Sheepfold. David the shepherd, Psa. 78:52-55, 68-72. False shepherds, Ezek. 34:1-10. The fold restored, Ezek. 34:1-17. The duty and reward of undershepherds, 2 Pet. 5:1-9. The lost sheep found, Matt. 18:10-14. Christ the Shepherd and the Door, John 10:1-16.

Life and Conduct Setting: Soul refreshment seems to be the key thought of the passage presented in the double figure of a green, well-watered pasture, and a joyous, bountiful feast. 1. God,

lifted out of the distant heavens, is placed with man, even more, He becomes "my Shepherd" in tenderest intimacy. 2. The sheep nature falls an easy prey to its enemies, hence the need of a shepherd possessing superior strength and wisdom. 3. A pasture where sheep lie down in content and a table where the cup overflows denote spiritual blessings without stint or measure. 4. There is no true proportion between our service and His goodness. He leadeth us for His name's sake, or regard for His own moral perfection. 5. A review of a life of Christian experience gives confidence that God will not cast us off in old age, or forsake us in death. The table spread by the Divine hand is not the banquet of a night or the reunion of a day, but the family meal where the partakers shall go out no more forever.

THE ABUNDANT SUPPLIES OF GRACE.

Point of Contact. When John Muir was a young man fresh from college he spent a summer in the Sierras herding sheep. He calls it the most important year of his life. He left the corral in June with a flock of two thousand and fifty. He returned late in September, having lost only thirteen. The wild life in the mountains did much for the sheep, but it did more for the future geologist and explorer.

What David Learned. It is written of Israel's greatest king, "He took David from the sheepfolds to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance * * * So he and Israel His inheritance. fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." The Bethlehem sheep ranch was a great university. The task of feeding and ruling a few hundred sheep developed the skill to feed and rule the hundreds of thousands of his kingdom. David's arm was strong, but we would miss our lesson if we should forget that David learned early to trust an arm that was stronger. Now in his old age he rests a bit, giving himself up to retrospect and reminiscence. He dwells upon his whole career, the days of his early pastoral life, and the years of royal responsibility. Conscious of the Providence that overruled and the Divine care that upheld, he gives glad testimony to the secret of his success. "The Lord is my shepherd."

Attachment of Shepherd and Sheep. The

Oriental shepherd made sheep raising a serious pursuit. Under that marvelous Palestinian sky, he had the occasion and the conditions for communing with nature. But he never forgot that first of all he was a shepherd. At any moment his serene musings might be broken by the attack of a lion or a bear. Then at great personal hazard he became their protector. David fought for his sheep as a father would fight for his children. Through such experiences there grew up the tenderest intimacy between the shepherd and his sheep. Having a small flock, the shepherd knew each sheep by name, and the sheep in turn learned the shepherd's voice, and followed him rather than a stranger. He led them where the grass was tallest and tenderest, and the water most abundant. Under his watchful eye they could lie down in restful content. Such is the tender relationship which may be established between God and the soul.

Keeping the Count Full. David kept his father's sheep, but he was not a craven hireling. His was a labor of love. Jesse knew that his son would keep the count full. The wild beast that stalked at night to prey upon his flock would pay for his presumption by his carcass. So the Heavenly Father knew when He sent forth the Son of David from the ivory palaces of Heaven that He would guard well the sheep fold, and destroy the last enemy of the race to keep the count

full. And when the Heavenly Father saw His darling Son's garments all dripping with blood, the guilty brothers said, "An evil beast hath devoured him." But the Father knew that His Son had slain the wild beasts, sin and death, and completed the work for which He was sent,—to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"But the Master Shepherd shook His head;
The count was short, and He gently said,—
'I have a hundred to love and keep,
And I must find my wayward sheep.

"The wood may frown, and the thorn may tear,
And death creep forth from the rocky lair,—
Through wood, and thorn, and death I hold
My sheep, till all are in the fold."

Paths of Righteousness. The great superiority of the Eastern shepherd over the Western is that the Oriental herder goes before his sheep and picks out their way for them. If the sheep were left to themselves they might miss the greenest pastures, the deep, cool waters, the gradual, easy descent, and the safe way through the treacherous There is a world of difference between the sheeppaths made by sheep instinct and the path made by the sagacious, careful shepherd. When a human life chooses its own way, following appetite and impulse, it can only be a crooked, meandering path, oftentimes dangerously near forbidden ledges. It is as foolhardy to pick our way through this life without Christ's direction and presence as to cross the Alps without a guide.

Before His followers were ever called Christians at Antioch the manner and method of Christian living was referred to in the Acts of the Apostles as "the Way." And Christ declared that all He had to teach, all He was in character was included in that triple designation, "the Way, the Truth, the Life." In conduct He did only those things that pleased the Father. His counsels and precepts set for all times the boundaries of true ethics and morality. His life became the one historic example to men, the perfect and original career for all to imitate. In a very real sense Christ is still the Good Shepherd going before, leading in the paths of righteousness. The path of right living leads away from the slippery places of sin; though narrow and straight, it leads to life eternal; it is the only way that is pleasing to God. Ancient prophecy is the sign post directing thereto. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Through the Valley of Shadows. We can well imagine those dark, deep, sunless ravines between the mountains through which David led his sheep. Here the beasts of prey would find a natural hiding place. The timid sheep of their own accord would never pass through these shadowy depths

But the shepherd going before armed with rod and staff inspired confidence. The staff supported the shepherd in hill climbing and was his weapon against wild beasts and robbers. The rod or crook guided the sheep, and in dangerous places helped to lift them out. There are many dangerous places in life that inspire terror, but it is a comfort to the good man to know that his steps are ordered of the Lord.

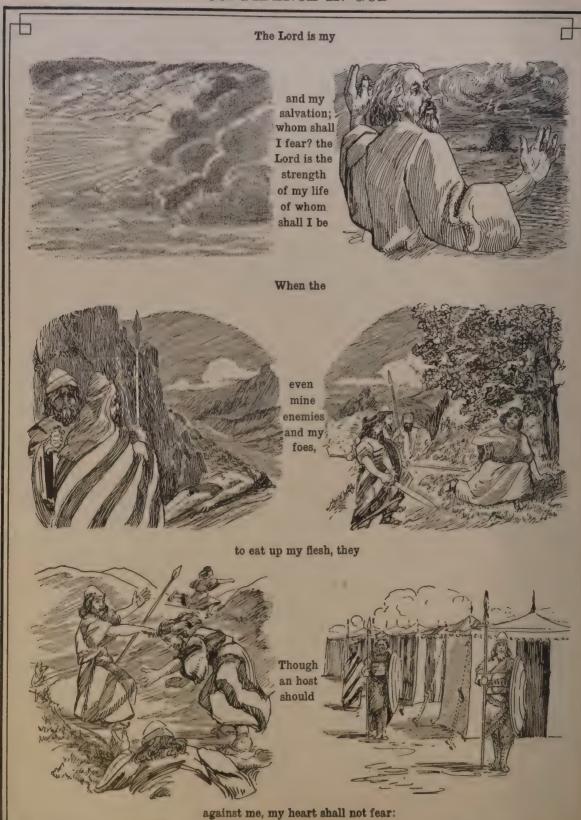
Man naturally dreads death; even to him who hopefully looks beyond it there comes an involuntary shudder. But in the presence of Christ's companionship shadows will flee. "There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes." The walk down to the cold waters and through them will be like the walk to Emmaus. "I will fear no evil, for Thou art near me." This Psalm might well be called the friendship pillow of dying saints. This Shepherd Psalm has been whispered more by dying lips than any other passage of scripture.

The Table of Goodness and Mercy Prepared. Rich as is the Psalmist's figure of the sheep so contented and supplied that they lie down in the midst of the tender grass, it is not equal to the burden of his luxurious thought. So he changes his figure from a sheep to a banqueter, reminding us of the Savior's exclamation, "How much more, then, is a man better than a sheep."

The natural world to David was a feast. He had enjoyed good health; he had a full, bright eye to enjoy beauty whether of flowers or of stars. He had a musical and poetic nature. He drank deep of the cup of friendship, leaving in his attachment for Jonathan an immortal picture. Even his one-time enemy, Saul the jealous, had been compelled at times to sit in the gallery uninvited and look down upon David seated at the feast of popular favor. Perhaps David strikes a note of personal thanksgiving for his kingly favors when the one-time shepherd lad declares, "Thou anointest my head with oil," and his mind goes back to that glad day when old Samuel consecrated him to be 2 king. He completes this picture of spiritual abundance by declaring that the cup of grace overflows—kindness beyond measure. The delights and satisfactions of the Christian life are the royal bounty of God's overflowing cup. They include forgiveness of our sins, cleansed hearts fired with new motives, the gift of the Holy Comforter, the witness of Christ's abiding presence, the sure promises of God, unlimited possibilities for service, and the assurance of eternal life. No wonder David desired that in such a banquet-house he might live forever.

Practical Thoughts. 1. Contentment is found in absence of jealousy as much as in accumulation of riches. 2. Refreshment, guidance, protection, abundance, these are the four legs to the table the Lord prepares. 3. The still waters of God are not the boisterous currents of dissipation, neither are they the Dead Sea of stagnation and satiety. 4. A sense of God's presence is a silent rebuke to anxiety and fear. 5. The beauty of the rainbow comes after the storm, and the beauty of the Shepherd Psalm breaks through the tear-stained spectacles of old age.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD



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PSA, XXVII: 1-3.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

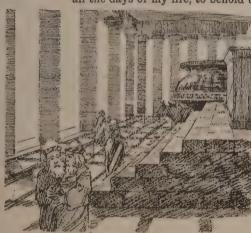


though

should
rise against
me, in this
will I be
confident.
One thing
have I
desired of
the Lord,
that will I
seek after;
that I may
dwell in the



all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his



For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his



in the secret of his



shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon



And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

PSA. XXVII: 3-6.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 27:1-6.

Prayer: God of David, my Sword and Buckler, help me to drive out of my life the secret enemy of sin and the boasting giant of fear. With Thee on my side I have no enemy that can harm me. Make me not afraid of the leaders of opinion or the great host of the majority that may be encamped against me. Whether I am under the roof of Thy sanctuary or in the midst of the storm in Thy great out-of-doors Thou wilt hide me in the pavillion of Thy love. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: A Psalm of fearless trust written by David probably soon after Absalom's rebellion. Deprived of the sanctuary service, he extols its gracious benefits. The reference here is to the tent erected on Mount Zion to receive the ark of the covenant.

Scripture Setting: The King's Token of Victory. David flees from Jerusalem, II Sam. 15:30-37. Jehovah's pledge to Jacob, Gen. 28:10-22. Jehovah encourages Joshua, Josh. 1:2-7. The pledge of the Divine presence, Isa. 43:1-7. Saved from slippery places, Psa. 73:1-18.

Strong Son of God, immortal love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:

Thou madest man he knowns not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

—Alfred Tennyson.

Life and Conduct Setting: The whole passage shows how communion with the Divine furnishes reserve strength for the soul under trial. I. The measure of a strong life is its ability to resist adverse conditions. 2. Our confidence in God grows through adversity as the cedar roots strike deeper by battling with storm. 3. "Sharper than an adder's tooth is the ingratitude of a thankless child."
4. Our appreciation of public worship is increased by forcible separation from it. 5. Some fitting temple inquiries: The benefits of suffering; the meaning of life; the destiny of the soul.

DAVID'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Point of Contact. On the supposition that David composed this Psalm shortly after Absalom's unsuccessful rebellion, we shall understand it best by remembering the conditions of the king's exile from Jerusalem. How sorely did he miss the services of the sanctuary. We have now followed David all the way up from the red-haired shepherd lad to the enviable position of Israel's greatest king. Hitherto we have seen him move forward through an almost unbroken succession of victories. In this lesson is exhibited the strength of his soul in adversity.

The truthful historian records that this great character was marred by sin. Under peculiar temptations he had fallen, but the sincerity and depth of his penitence we may judge by a study of the lesson which follows this. Irving says, "The hearts of a hundred men strove and struggled together within the narrow continent of David's heart." Because of David's sin against the house of Uriah, Nathan the prophet had declared that his child would die and God would raise up evil against him out of his own house. So that when Absalom raised his rebellion against his royal father, David remembered the warning, and fled from his home in Jerusalem suddenly unmanned. Not his sins, for they were sudden, erratic, and incidental, nor his fear, for it was brief, but his zeal and loyalty to Jehovah, ever steadfast and persistent, mark the strength of his character.

Sustaining Power of Personal Faith.
"The Lord is my light." Here is the light
that did not fail. Driven from the capital
he had builded, David the exile was in the

dark. Hurrying up the side of the Mount of Olives, with head covered and weeping, he stops long enough to pray. Here his courage returns. God is the good man's light, and prayer is the instantaneous button by which the illumination is turned on. David thereupon sends back to the city the priests who are fleeing with the ark of the covenant. He is confident that he shall return also. He journeys forward conscious of the Divine presence.

The Destroyers Destroyed. Absalom had for-feited his right to live, first by murdering his brother Amnon, and afterwards by stirring up an insurrection against the king. His ambitions led to plot violence against his father. But in his eagerness to eat up his flesh he stumbled and fell. In the battle he set to slay David, Absalom him-self was killed. Such is ever the irony of fate, the retributive stroke of justice. Haman builds a scaffold to swing Mordecai, and from it he himself swings. Wilkes Booth fires a shot against the government, and the flag of the government catches the spur of his boot, throwing him so heavily as to break his leg and prevent his escape. Ahithophel, the wisest of David's friends, turns traitor, his plans are foiled, and in remorse he dies by his own Judas meets Christ in the midnight of His agony with a traitor's kiss, he lives long enough to say, "I have betrayed innocent blood," then rushes to adjust the halter to his neck. Soon his bleeding, broken body lies on the rocks beneath. Thus have evildoers plotted, stumbled and fallen. The body of Absalom swinging by the hair, struck through with arrows, is history's scarcerow for all evil birds of prey.

Confident Against an Enemy's Host. From Dan to Beersheeba the insurrectionists flocked to the colors of the young prince until they were like the sand by the sea for multitude. Twenty thousand were slaughtered in the battle. Josephus says that David had but 4,000 mustered under him. But the king was not afraid. His soldiers see his courage and exclaim, "Thou art worth 10,000." How often do the pages of history corroborate the wise man's conclusion that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." It is not a question of opposing numbers so much as of unwillingness to surrender. It is the virtue of religion to destroy fear and inspire confidence. "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight."

It is wonderful how God clears the way for one resolute, confident man. Think of Robert L. Stevenson, the invalid courageous, who battling against hemorrhages, could write, "Acts may be forgiven, but not even God Himself can forgive the hangerback." One Sunday afternoon when he was a boy his grandmother insisted on reading aloud a chapter from the Bible. "Well, Granny," he said, "if I must listen, read me a chapter from the fightingest part of the Old Testament." It was that part that David had a hand in making.

Faith's Arsenal the Sanctuary. We are indebted to David for the loftiest expressions of loyalty and regard for God's house. Throughout his life he consistently engaged in public worship. The temple service owed much to the suggestions and labors of David. He first of all planned a stone-built sanctuary, and collected much of the material for its construction and embellishment. He furnished the noble hymns afterwards sung by the temple choirs. But the sanctuary also did much for David. He never esteemed it so highly as when in his exile he was deprived of its gracious benefits. Its ritual and its praise unfolded the beauty of the Lord. It was there he contemplated the benign attributes of Deity and poured out his soul in adoration. Once he passed through a conflict of doubt and almost lost faith. His mind had stumbled over the prosperity of the wicked. They escaped trouble and had no pangs in death. Perhaps he had cleansed his heart in vain. In a noble Psalm he tells us the victory of personal faith:

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God, and considered their latter end."

By inquiring in God's temple we arrive at a correct philosophy of life. Christ, our example in all things, found as a lad in the

able to look down upon our enemies we have placed ourselves beyond their reach. It is something beautiful to see how David could pity his enemies. How carefully does he gather up the dust of Saul from a dishonored grave to give it decent burial. Yet Saul had struck at him with murderous intent, and hunted him as a partridge over the mountain. And when Absalom came on the field to slay him he gives orders to his captains to deal gently for his sake with Absalom. It was such generous impulses as these that made David a man after God's own heart. That man indeed can lift his

head above his enemies who has learned that

enmity weakens the nerve power, that envy is a slow poison, and that "He that ruleth

his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." A calm, settled conviction that the just Judge shall at last adjudicate all claims exalts a character far above littleness and

temple the great call to his Father's business.

The Exaltation of Life. When we are

meanness. His pigmy enemies may snarl and bite round about him but he is safe. Such a man is lifted up upon a rock.

Songs That Never Die. The sacrifices of joy which David vowed to offer in the sanctuary were the immortal Psalms he wrote. It was the peculiar province of this shepherd minstrel to leave a great body of national and religious songs. Thus imperishably with his songs of question and answer, strophe and antistrophe, has he written his name large upon the world's religious life. His harp was

his magic wand. And in his last words he himself seemed to be the vibrating instrument upon which the Divine breath played.

Quiz and Study. 1. How did Joseph's slave days in Egypt, Moses' flight into Midian, and Paul's imprisonment at Rome fulfil the Divine purpose? 2. In what particular incidents in David's life was God his (1) light; (2) salvation; (3) strength? 3. How does Divine worship contribute in making character (1) beautiful; (2) joyful; (3) exalted? 4. Where were nature's first temples? 5. Where did Christ tell the Samaritan woman that men would eventually worship? 6. What is John's reference to the temple in Revelation and its recaning?

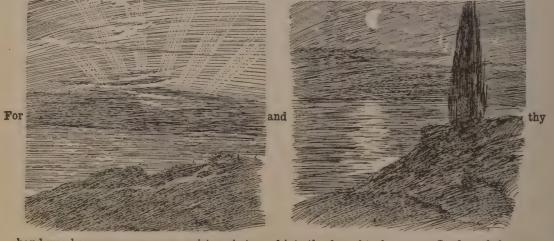
Challenge Text. The — is my —, and I will not — what — shall do unto —. Heb. 13:(?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Faith is trusting God in

Practical Thoughts. 1. Faith is trusting God in the dark; the reality to the soul of things invisible to the senses. 2. David looked forward to his return to the sanctuary with the hope and dependence that a steamer captain looks forward to the next coaling station. 3. David was not the soldier who feared to strike a trial blow on the boss of his shield lest he break it. He had tried God, and God was his salvation. 4. Evil men, like beetles and bats, scurry for darkness, but David calls upon God to turn on the light, "Search me, try me, examine me."



unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.



hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledge my



my transgressions unto the Lord; and thouforgavest the iniquity of my sin.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 32:1-11.

Prayer: Thou, loving, patient Christ, who would not bruise the broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax take my poor heart with all my sense of sin. and shame, and failure, and take my hand to lift me up. Make me glad with a sense of sin's burden removed, and with the assurance that Thou hast given me a clean heart. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

"Most quick to pardon sins is He; Who unto God draws near One forward step, God taketh three To meet, and quit his fear."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: The second of seven penitential Psalms written by David about one year after the death of Uriah. Its historical background is found in 2 Sam. 12:1-10. Read in this connection

Psalms 51, inspired by the same occasion.
Scripture Setting: The Welcome of the Home-Coming. The Heaven's rejoicing over the repentant, Luke 15:1-7. The call to repentance, Matt. 3:8-12. The gospel of a second chance, Jer. 18:1-8. The sinful woman forgiven, John 8:1-11. The reward of true repentance, Isa, 1:11-18. Final blessedness of the repentant, Rev. 7:13-17.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage suggests the warm welcome which awaits the sinner's return. 1. Even nature is a kind mistress, healing the ugly scars of last year's storms. 2. A broken bone can bear but little weight; and a heart broken by remorse is sensitive to love. 3. Only after we have wandered far do we appreciate the light in the window beckoning us back. 4. Our love for Him may flicker like a will-o'-the-wisp, but His changeless love shines like a steady beacon. 5. "As we forgive others." Here is the key that unlocks the treasures of Divine forgiveness.

SIN CONCEALED, CONFESSED, AND CANCELLED.

Point of Contact. For men high as well as men low, for men on the throne as well as men on the scaffold, there is only one way to become reconciled to a sinful past. For David, whose word had become law, it was no easy task to submit to and acknowledge the Divine law which he had so ruthlessly broken. His guilty love for a beautiful face had taken full possession of him. He was willing to have the husband who stood in the way of the gratification of his covetous desire murdered in battle. Nathan recites a parable, as if an actual case, in which a situation of extreme injustice appeals to the shepherd-king's sense of fair play. He demands that the guilty shall pay four-fold restitution and forfeit his life. Suddenly the weight of the whole accusation is forced upon him. "Thou art the man." One element redeems the dark picture. David repents, renounces his own act, and resolves to arise from his shame.

Blessedness of Forgiveness. King David put in a miserable year from the time he conceived the murder of Uriah to the critical moment when by the point of the prophet's parable and the point of his accusing finger, he was brought to confession and repentance. David's sincere prayer was that God might restore unto him the joy of His salvation. The clouds broke and the long eclipse ended the very moment David cried, "I have sinned against the Lord." For David knew that God was waiting to establish the old relationships, just as the prodigal knew that all would be well the very moment he came to make the great resolve, "I will arise, and go, and say, father, I have sinned." To an awakened conscience sin becomes an | ily powers. "My bones waxed old through

intolerable nightmare. Its spell is broken when God says, I will put away the remembrance of it forever. Then there breaks upon the heart once burdened a new hope, in the Divine compassion as welcome as is the return of the sun's bright rays to the storm-tossed mariner after weary days of darkness and danger. To the impure the face of God is always eclipsed; but the blessing to the pure in heart is that they understand Him, appreciate His character, and feel a warm sense of His sympathy.

"Helpless and foul as the trampled snow, Sinner, despair not! He stoopeth low To rescue the soul that is lost in its sin, And raise it to life and enjoyment again,"

Yes. David was the guilty man; but now he is the blessed man whose transgression is covered. He would go a step farther; he would have a spirit without guile. He desired purity as well as forgiveness. He had been pardoned; now he would be washed. While none but the redeemed themselves can know the exaltation of spirit which is awakened when the great love of the Divine pardon flashes upon the personal consciousness, yet there is a Heavenly beatitude beyond forgiveness. It is the beatitude of virgin purity. This world's ideal life is not his who repented of his sin, but His "who knew no sin."

The Curse of a Convicting Conscience. Now that David's restoration is assured, he naturally contrasts his happy estate with the memory of those days when he kept silence, hiding his sin. His wrong-doing was felt, but not acknowledged. This mental condition produced severe prostration of his bod-

my roaring (groaning) all the day long." Not only were the days intolerably lengthened, but the nights were filled with sleeplessness. "Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me." What a misadjustment sin had wrought; instead of being in the Divine hand, feeling a sense of eternal support, he was under the Divine hand, feeling the pressure of eternal wrath. "My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." In David's country frequent and copious rains are the rule in the winter months. Soon after the heat of summer arrives, the grass withers, the flower fades, and the plant is dried up by its roots. The earlier part of David's reign, marked by innocency and integrity, had resembled a field refreshed by generous showers; but when God stirred up his conscience and set his sins in order before his face, his courage failed, and the beauty of his life's setting turned to an arid wilderness. The outward picture is fair, but inwardly the scene is a veritable chamber of horrors. The king sits proudly on his throne, for his rule is secure. The Ammonites are overcome, the Syrians are defeated. Valiant men are willing to die for him, beautiful women sing his praises. Fair Bathsheba becomes his wife and a baby's prattle is heard in the palace. Yet over this fair picture hangs a suspended sword, for already it was written, "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

The nature and operation of conscience have not changed since David's time. We all can remember times when we "kept silence" and suffered, while all the time conscience whispered, "Better go and talk it over and make the matter right." God's hand was heavy upon us so long as the wrong was unconfessed and unforgiven. We have lain on our bed when the lights were all out listening to the patter of the rain on the shingles and we could not sleep. We thought so hard that the moisture seemed to coze from every pore of our body. We had wronged a brother weeks before when we were at play. He had forgotten all about it and was sleeping soundly at our side. What was it that kept us awake and brought misery with our remembrance? It was the power of conscience. And how the load was lifted, and sleep came when we wakened our brother and made a full confession and secured forgiveness. A convicted conscience is often the seeming cause of a painful experience, but the real cause lies deeper in a disordered life. If we take into our stomach poisonous food, how sickening and painful is the effect produced. But a merciful providence sends the pain as a warn-

ing that something is wrong and it leads us to a remedy. How fortunate that the soul is guarded by this tender, reproving monitor.

Forgiveness Based on Confession. No sooner had Nathan let go with unerring aim the sharpened shaft of conviction at David's heart than there springs from the king's lips the cry, "I have sinned against the Lord." As in all true repentance there were five elements in Dav.d's appeal to God, 1, conviction; 2, confession; 3, torrow; 4, plea for mercy; 5, purpose of amendment. "I acknowledge my sin unto Thee." If every sinner made public confession in detail of his wrongdoing, little good would result and much harm might follow. All sins, even those against our neighbors and ourselves, are against God, since they violate His law. The confession of the soul, then, in most cases, is to be poured into the ear of God alone. To morally turn ourselves wrong side out for public inspection is not for edification.

Restitution, however, must accompany inward confession if the sin be the appropriation of something that belongs to another. The scripture rule is a four-fold restitution. David's sin was the more flagrant because he was the king. It would furnish a public example. The fall was the more to be deplored because he had been called a man after God's own heart. However others may have condemned David, none have done it so unsparingly as David himself. When he wrote his penitential Psalms, throbbing like his own overflowing heart, he published his guilt as widely as it could be borne by the language of man. "I confessed and Thou forgavest." Confession always precedes forgiveness and is the most eloquent plea for it. When the king shows humbled penitence Nathan asks no more, but immediately declares his pardon. There is no red tape in the government of God. Pardon is instantaneous. No penitent suppliant was ever kept waiting at the gate of Heaven. "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

The quality of mercy is not strained; It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven Upon the place beneath.—Merchant of Venice.

Quiz and Study. 1. What other persons are involved in the situation in the case of David's sin? 2. What did Nathan declare would be his double punishment? Did both disasters occur? 3. To whom did Christ offer forgiveness at the last moment, and what promise was attached? 4. Name five Bible sinners who became Bible saints.

five Bible sinners who became Bible saints.

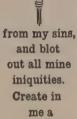
Challenge Text. "I will — to you the — that the — hath —, Joel 2:(?).

Practical Thoughts, 1. Christ warned against evil thoughts. A covetous look proved David's undoing. 2. The sinner's first impulse is to flee from God; his safety lies in fleeing to God. 3. Nathan stands for the true friend who shows us our fault and leads us to repentance. 4. Sinful experiences may have a disciplinary and warning value, but "the bird with with a broken pinion never soared as high again."

THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT









O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy



transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 51:1-17.

Prayer: My Father and my God, I have sinned before Heaven and against Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son. But Thou hast never given me up, nor closed the door against my return. I have read the loving letter in which full pardon is freely offered me. Sick of the world and weary of its deceptions, I am coming back. Forgive me, receive me, and restore to me the gladness of the old days. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

"Break off the yoke of inbred sin, And fully set my spirit free. I cannot rest till pure within, Till I am wholly lost in Thee."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: This Psalm of David, from earliest Christian times, has been called, by way of eminence, the penitential Psalm. It is also known as the Miserere, from its opening words in the Vulgate, Miserere mei Domine. See previous lesson for its historical basis.

Scripture Setting: Confession and Cure of Sin. The people's sin-offering, Lev. 16:15-19. Solomon's prayer for his people, 1 Kings 8:23-34. Isaiah's confession and forgiveness, Isa. 6:1-10. Job's acknowledgment of sin, Job. 7:11-21. The Redeemer, 1 John 1:1-10.

Life and Conduct Setting: This portion of David's penitential prayer expresses the universal desire of a sin-sick soul for God. 1. For every deadly and poisonous contact God does provide a healing antidote. 2. Lost soul-health, like lost treasure, is most surely found by immediate search to recover it. 3. Man-like it is to fall into sin; fiend-like it is to remain therein; Christ-like it is to rescue from its power. 4. The rejoicing of recovery leads us to publish abroad the good news of the cure.

THE BEATITUDE OF THE BROKEN HEART.

Point of Contact. St. Augustine, in his last illness, asked that one verse be painted on the wall opposite his bed, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." There is a Persian proverb declaring that nothing broken has any value except the heart, which becomes more valuable the more it is broken. By some it is supposed that David, the "warrior king," was lacking in the more tender feelings of humanity. As a matter of fact David himself, especially in his later years, was not often in the field. His wars were carried on by his "mighty men of valor," who bore the brunt of the active military operations. By the glimpses we catch of his personality; when he laments over the death of Jonathan and Saul; in his whole attitude towards Absalom; and in the spirit with which he received Nathan's rebuke, we conclude that David was a man of tender heart.

Prayer for Purity. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Purity as well as pardon is desired by all true penitents. David uses three words to describe the contents of his heart, "transgression," "iniquity," and "sin." He also uses three terms to describe his heart's need, "purge," "wash," and "blot out." He had often seen the branch of hyssop dipped in water to be sprinkled upon some tent where a dead body had lain that it might be ceremonially clean according to the ordinances of Moses. Perhaps, too, he had seen the priest sprinkle with a branch of hyssop the blood of a dead bird upon a leper to cure him of his leprosy. His own heart seems like a dead body cor-

rupted with putrefaction, or the spotted flesh that had been attacked by loathsome leprosy. His hope is that the Divine hand with the hyssop branch may purge 'him of his evil nature. Not ceremonial cleansing, but a pure heart is the burden of his prayer. The executioner of Sir Walter Raleigh asked him if his head lay right upon the block. His answer was, 'It matters little, my friend, how my head lies, provided my heart is right.''

"Blot out all mine iniquities." However unerringly God remembers the sins of the impenitent, He graciously promises to forget the iniquities of all who repent and reform. "Thy sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Ian Maclaren tells of a stern, Puritanic father who, because Flora, his daughter, became lost in the temptations of a big city, blotted her name from the record in the great family Bible. Much more like God was that Scotch mother in her conduct towards her wayward girl, when she had her own pictures placed in the dance-halls of Glasgow with the words underneath, Come home. One night at a dance there was a shriek and a faint. They raised a young woman from the dance floor and she sobbed, Take me home, my mother.

"Create in me a clean heart." Gold is pure, when with crucible and fire it has been separated from all not gold; the diamond is pure when the lapidary finds nothing in it to hinder the refraction and reflection of light; the mirror is pure when it reflects accurately the image before it; the lens is pure when without flaw it passes on the sunbeam as perfect as when it came from the sun; the heart is pure when without distortion it sees the moral perfections of the Divine attributes.

"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." David remembers the pure white mountain tops of Lebanon that seemed so near to Heaven, made beautiful because God had covered their once-scarred and onceblackened heights with a merciful mantle of snow-flakes. Even the snow of lofty Lebanon might be soiled by the wind-borne dust. but God could wash away the last traces of guilt, making him whiter than snow.

The Poet of Praise. "Make me to hear joy and gladness." There was only One who could take David's life with its broken strings, its jangled chords, its fault, and fret and sin, and make it Israel's sweet harp of gladness and joy, capable of such music as the twenty-third Psalm. Hideous sounds on an instrument are called "wolf-notes." Sin had almost spoiled the music, introducing the wolf-notes of jealousy, anger, bitterness, hate, pride, and resentment. God changed his life to a grateful song. He found that his spiritual blessings were as hard to count as the stars in that Syrian sky. They included His loving care, the satisfactions of a Gospel experience, the renewal of his heart, sanctification by the Spirit, the gift of eternal life, and the abiding presence of God. Enough to awaken gladness and joy!

Once Mendelssohn came to see the great Freiburg organ. The old custodian, partly blind, refused the stranger permission to play. After much persuasion he granted him leave to play a few notes. The old keeper could hear, if he could not see. The few notes were enough. He knew the master was at the organ. There is only One who can bring out the highest and holiest within us.

"Great Master, touch us with Thy skilful hands; Let not the music that is in us die.

-Horatius Bonar. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." Mrs. Browning draws in satire the picture of a solemn dame who "thanked God and sighed." But David in one of his immortal songs (Psa. 41) exclaims, "Clap your hands," "shout unto God," "sing praises." A beautiful bit of rabbinical lore used by Longfellow in Sandalphon tells us that in Heaven there are two kinds of angels,-angels of service and angels of song. The angels of song belong to the higher order. The sweet singer of belong to the higher order. The sweet singer of Israel was certainly one of God's angels of song. He made the Psalms to be the music room of the Bible where the Spirit swept over the keyboard of the human soul. Psalmist, prophet, and apostle unite in declaring that redemption will be the joyful theme of the great angelic hosts.

Practice of the Presence of God. "Cast me not away from Thy presence." The permanence and high-mindedness of David's friendships reveal the nobility of his soul. His friendship for Jonathan rested on deep foundations: they loved the same love: they were in sympathy with the same high ideals of honor and manhood. When Jonathan died David's soul was as a dove bereft of his mate. Long years after when David finds the cripple boy belonging to Jonathan's family, he gives him a permanent place at the royal table. This trait in the warrior king of Israel shows he was capable of spiritual communion. He loathed his sins because they would separate him from God. He knew that permanent friendship and fellowship rested upon similarity of feelings. In the inner sanctuary of his heart he must be clean, like unto God, else he would be cast away from God's presence. So David practiced the presence of God, thought God's thoughts, and made himself by Divine help fit to be a friend of God.

· "Uphold me by Thy free spirit." A man is not really cured until his character is changed, until he has substituted peace, love and courage for fear, worry and sin. Religion means a binding together, a power that unites and conserves the elements of our life. David had pleuty of friends in his lifetime who played him false. We have already studied two, Ahithophel, his counsellor, and Absalom, his son. David's desire was the spiritual presence of a Friend who was touched with sympathy when he suffered; One who loved him with a love that was deep, tender, strong, everlasting; One who never counsels rashly, but possessed all wisdom for the counsels rashly, but possessed an wisdom for the ordering of his steps. This consciousness that God would never forsake him girded his life with strength. Said an invalid, restored to perfect health, "I've developed a passion for telling everybody of the good news about how I was cured."
This is a natural symptom of soul health. The individual and the church with a healthy, positive experience begins at once the two-fold work of evangelizing and indoctrinating,—converting sinners, and teaching one-time transgressors.

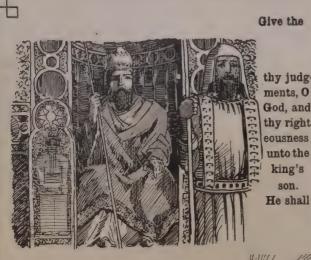
Quiz and Study. 1. What three expressions are used in this lesson showing David's desire for entire cleansing? 2. What three expressions are used to show the Divine impelling? 3. In what two ways would David show his moral transformation?
4. What public but ineffectual attempt did Pilate make to clear himself from the guilt of Christ's death?

Challenge Text. "Though your - be as -, they

shall be as — as —; though they be — like —, they shall be as —. '' Isa, 1:(\(\frac{1}{2}\)).

Practical Thoughts. 1. The great trees of California, one hundred feet in circumference, have seeds no larger than a lettuce seed. The seed of sin is small, but grows. 2. Sin is contrary to the Divine nature, and Heaven is permanent similarity of feelings with God. 3. Great souls like David broke through the forms of ceremonial law, and demanded an absolution from sin personal and conscious. 4. The deeper the sense of sin, the more heart-felt the gratitude for pardon. 5. The broken heart is the most precious thank-offering laid on the

MESSIAH'S REIGN



thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the



thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The



shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the



of the people, shall the



of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the



and

through out all generations. He shall come down like

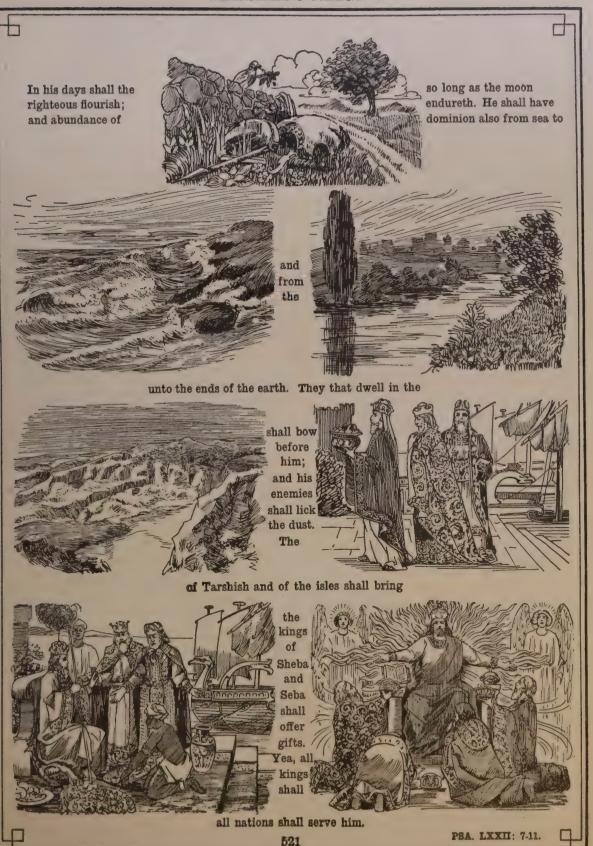
endure,



as showers that water the earth.

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PSA. LXXII. 1-6.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 72:1-12.

Prayer: O Christ, Thou Friend of the poor and needy, Thou Deliverer of the oppressed, hear the cry that goes up from homes of poverty and disease. Do for troubled hearts what Thou didst do for Mary and Martha. Plead for our cities as Thou didst pray with tears for Jerusalem. Cleanse our churches of wrong thoughts and practices as Thou didst cleanse the temple. Put an end to human hate and meanness, and let the millennium begin now in our hearts. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

"Step by step since time began We see the steady gain of man; For still the new transcends the old In signs and tokens manifold; Slaves rise up men; the olive waves With roots deep set in battle graves."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: This Psalm was composed by David in his old age as a prayer for his son, Solomon, about to ascend the throne. It has a highly wrought figurative style not unlike the second

Scripture Setting: The Nature of Messiah's Reign. The Messiah promised, Isa. 11:1-10. Solomon's glory excelled, Matt. 6:25-34. The strength of the Messiah, Isa. 63:1-6. The Messiah expected, John 4:19-25. The Messiah found, John 1:35-41.

Life and Conduct Setting: This passage pictures Jesus as the Desire of nations. 1. Rightnesses excelled a patient by furnishing a sure found.

eousness exalts a nation by furnishing a sure foun-

dation upon which the whole edifice may safely rest. 2. The world's life has only begun to tap the resources of water, sunlight, electricity and steam; the church has only begun to utilize the diversified powers of the Holy Spirit. 3. Three ways in which Christ lives eternally: in the affectionate remembrance of the redeemed; in the literature, institutions, and social life of succeeding generations; and in the presence of God and of His 4. Three ways by which we make Christ King: the giving of our wealth; the living witness of truth; and the offering of prayer.

A REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Vs. 1, 2 and 3. That Solomon would "judge the people with righteousness and the poor with judgment" was seen by an incident that occurred in the midst of the festivities of his accession. Two mothers of the poorer class come to demand justice of the new king. The people stand around wondering what the youthful ruler will do. The mother of the living child tells her story with the sorrow and sincerity of truth. Not her son, but a dead babe, had been placed in her bed while she slept. The other mother as strenuously insisted that she was the real mother of the living child. Then the king throws himself upon the unerring instincts of nature. The living child is to be divided—and one-half is to be given to each. The true mother betrays her affection: "O my lord, give her the living babe (she uses a peculiar and affectionate word) and in no wise slay it." The king repeats to his swordsman word for word, the mother's cry. And the living child goes to the arms of the true mother.

Thus inaugurated Solomon's reign began as a golden age of jubilant delight. royal justice to the poor was like the welcome showers in the thirsty East. "Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." The king was his own administrator of justice. He sat in the gate and adjudicated impartially the claims of his subjects. All classes prospered until idolatry and a pas- thank God and take courage.

sion for glory captured Solomon's heart. To build a glorious palace for himself and another for Pharaoh's daughter, he laid upon his people a grievous yoke of taxes.

Beyond Solomon, therefore, we must look for the enduring reign of righteousness, which was ushered in that day Jesus stood in the little synagogue in Nazareth and read, "He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Jesus came to tell us that God is our Father and all men are our brothers. Not the least hopeful sign of our times is a real passion for righteousness. Men are learning to love kindness and to hate meanness. Even the very corruption which stains the pages of our legislation has been brought to light because fearless Christian men in the spirit of Christ have demanded that these evils shall cease. There is a growing demand for righteousness in trade; our cities are being cleansed of corruption. These are the days of splendid temperance victories. Beautiful service towards the waif, the orphan, and the morally depraved, is being carried on by institutions of charity and reform. The cry of the children has been heard, and child labor abolished. These illustrate the increasing hold Christ has upon our civilization. Much remains to be done, but we

Friend of the Poor and Needy. Verses 5-7. The dynasty of David's son was to end, but the Psalmist here catches the vision of that inaugurated by Jehovah's Son which shall continue "as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations."

The luxury and selfish glory of Solomon's last days probably shortened his reign. Ascending the throne as the friend of the poor and early establishing a reputation as a just judge, he later formed a monopoly by which he became the great merchant prince, and enriched himself while his people suffered. Copying the Egyptians he enslaved the remnant of the Canaanitish race and sent them to the number of one hundred and fifty-three thou-sand to the quarries and forests of Lebanon. With palaces, summer homes, parks, and elaborate water works and defenses, even the Israelites were kept busy by the royal summons to share in rotation in this heavy labor. There could be but one end to this heavy labor. There could be but one end to all this extravagance. At sixty-one the king is prematurely old, facing a rising rebellion that grew out of the social injustices. The treasury was empty, the nation in debt, the taxes were multiplied, and the monopoly of trade more and more irksome. The glory of the temple and the royal palaces no longer dazzled the eyes of the people. The reign that began so gloriously ended in revolt and oppression.

When Jesus stood in the temple of Herod and declared, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here," He looked upon a nation that was oppressed and in bondage to Rome. His coming to befriend the poor and to redress all wrongs was like "rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth." And ever since it has been the glory of the greathearts of humanity to befriend the weak. An unrighteous government regards the children of poverty as having no rights. But the Christian nations are compelling justice and civilized methods even among the rude barbarians. The establishment of international tribunals and the growing hatred of war are the triumphs of Christianity over ancient error and point clearly to the day when there shall be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

Tributes to the Universal Monarch. Vs. 8-11 Mr. Hugh Boyd, who conducted an embassy to the king of Candy in Ceylon, describes the extreme reverence with which an Eastern monarch must be approached. "The removal of the curtain was the signal for my companions to make obeisance. They exhibited the most perfect degree of Eastern humiliation. They almost literally 'licked the dust,' prostrating themselves with their faces close to the stone floor, and throwing out their arms and legs, then rising on their knees, they repeated in a very loud voice a certain form of words of the most extravagant meaning; that the head of the king of kings might reach beyond the sun; that he might live a thousand years, etc.''

While the rich oriental setting here is undoubtedly a picture of the successful and widening reign of David's heir, yet it has a far deeper prophetic significance. extension of Christ's dominion is the result. not of military force, but of moral influence: all nations will be won by the righteousness of His sway, more especially by His care for the poor and afflicted. Those who "shall bow before Him" and "shall fall down before Him" are the believers who in the attitude of prayer approach Him to petition for moral perfection.

In old times on May first, it was an annual custom in London for thousands of inhabitants to resort early to the fields to bathe their faces with the dew upon the grass. It was a superstitious custom resting upon the belief that thus they would become beautiful. To bathe one's face every morning in the dew of Heaven by prayer and communion is the one sure way to obtain the inward beauty of a holy life and character. Such is the homage that God requires from king and peasant.

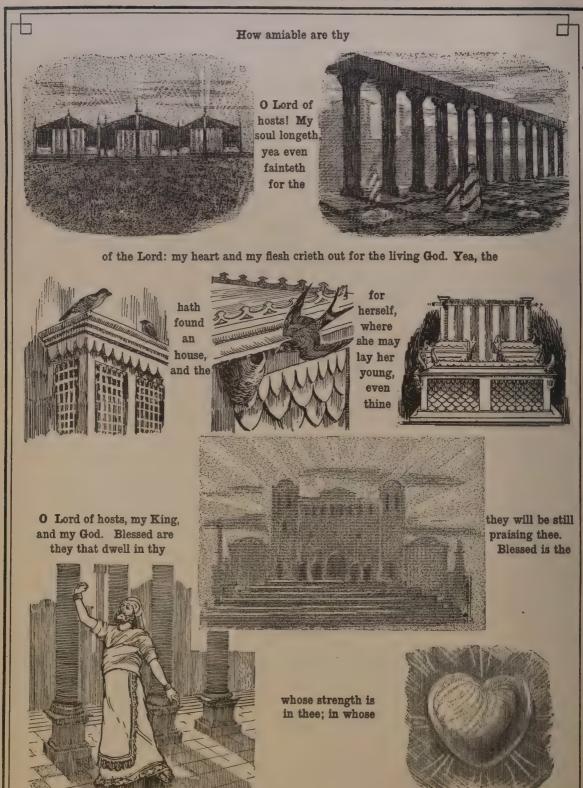
The Psalmist sees an ever widening domain extending "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." The foreign nations mentioned (verses 9 and 10) could hardly be included in the limits of Solomon's kingdom. It is a larger Kingdom than earth has known, whose King is to be righteous, universal, beneficent, and perpetual. It is only Christ's spiritual reign, present and prospective, that can meet the lofty thought of this beautifully wrought imagery.

Quiz and Study. 1. What references in this Psalm would indicate that it is a prayer for Solo-2. What indications are there that a future, universal, spiritual, perpetual Kingdom is also included? 3. What references in the N. T. directly mention Solomon; the Messiah? 4. Why did Jesus refuse to be King of His people, the Jews? 5. What will be the extent of His Kingdom in time, in territory, and nature of its subjects?

Challenge Text. "We have - the -, which is,

being interpreted, the —. John 1: (†)
Practical Thoughts. 1. The test of the greatness of Christ's life is the magnitude of its influence. 2. Nearly all the kings and presidents of civilized governments do publicly acknowledge the supreme rule of Christ and their loyalty to Him. 3. Those in authority need our prayers; larger duties call for added grace. 4. The poor, the needy, and the oppressed are being sympathized with, planned for, and cared for as they never were before. Christ is inspiring and moulding all our reforms and benevolences. 5. The remotest nations and those richest in natural resources are being evangelized. India's mineral wealth and Africa's future food supply will minister to the support of the Gospel.

DELIGHT IN GOD'S HOUSE



are the ways of them. 524

PSA. LXXXIV: 1-5.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 84:1-12.

A Boy's Prayer: Dear Father in Heaven, I am nothing but a poor, weak little fellow; I am tempted every day to do what is wrong; but I want to do what is right. I do want to be a good boy, and grow up to be a good, strong, noble man, and do lots of good in the world. There is ever so much fun in being a boy; but I want to be a boy in the right way. And so, dear Father, won't You help me today, for Jesus' sake? Amen.
Rev. C. H. Parkhurst, D. D.

"Though fate command me to the farthest verge Of the green earth * * Yet God is ever present, ever felt. In the wide waste as in the city full: And where He vital breathes there must be joy."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: The title to the above Psalm indicates it was written by one of the sons of Korah, a Levitical family of singers who accompanied David in his exile. The author, besides being a keeper of the doors, had doubtless been anointed to the priesthood. (Verse 9.)

Scripture Setting: Progressive Teaching of the Temple. The temple dedicated, 1 Kings 8:22-30. Jesus in the temple, Luke 2:25-38. The universal spiritual temple, John 4:19-24. The temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 3:9-17. The passing of the temple, Rev. 21:1-4, 21-27.

Life and Conduct Setting: 1, Wherever God is

worshipped, there He dwells. 2. Blessed are they whose hearts are in the way of worship, though their bodies are detained. It was well that David's heart built a temple, though his feet never entered it. 3. Dwelling in God's house means continuous communion with God, rather than constant participation in temple ordinances. 4. The church, the noblest expression of organized, effective Christianity, needs you more inside to improve it than outside to criticize it. 5. It is blessed to dwell in God's house; more blessed is he who dwelling in exile on dreary Patmos makes it the vestibule of Heaven.

THE MOST HALLOWED SPOT ON EARTH.

Point of Contact. "Much of interest is given to a Psalm if we will simply use the facts that the Psalm itself gives us. Take, for example, that beautiful lyric, the eightyfourth Psalm: "How amiable are Thy tabernacles. O Lord of hosts." It may not have been written as the modern title indicates. by David during his flight from Absalom; it seems not the lament of one who had been driven from his home in hasty, enforced flight, but, rather, of a permanent exile. But we shall lose half its beauty if we do not realize in imagination the situation of the singer-an "anointed one," and therefore a priest or a king-in lonely exile somewhere, and pining for the familiar and sacred scene in which his days were wont to be. And he envies even the happy birds that can fly away and make their home, where once he was, in the courts of the Lord's house; and his imagination paints the companies of pilgrims journeying up to the annual feasts. How natural and touching his imagery!—as spontaneous as

"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon, How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?"
—Prof. C. T. Winchester.

Our Church Home. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles." Every verse of this Psalm recalls a picture of the caravan journeys to the national festivals. Every spot of the familiar road, every station at which the writer had rested, lives in his heart. But it was the tabernacles, or tents, which housed the ark in David's time that stood forth the

loveliest picture of all. In the halls of our memory there hangs a picture—we call it Our Church Home. When a thousand miles away we still see through the mind's eye its holy walls, and hear through memory's perfect phonograph the songs, the prayers, the sacred words of long ago. That old church home may have been a temple grand, or it may have been a modest frame, nestling among the foothills, and lifting its slim white spire high over the little village. But there in that old church in childhood a gray-haired man of God laid his hand upon our young head in holy baptism. There we formed the early friendships of blessed memory. There we return on sad days to lay away our precious dead. In that old church mother saw her fair daughter given away by the sacred marriage vow. There it was long years before that she first met father when he led the village choir. It was the warm hearts in that dear old church that sweetened our joys, and took the sting out of all our sorrows. It was there, we gave our young hearts to God and were received into the fellowship of the church; there we first partook of the sacred emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, while our hearts beat faster, and our eyes dimmed with tears as we recalled His simple request, "This do in remembrance of Me." No wonder we sing with tenderest feeling:

> Beyond my highest joy I prize her Heavenly ways. Her sweet communion, solemn vows, Her hymns of love and praise.

A Nest for Her Young. "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest." This exile from his native land contrasts his own sad lot with the joyous swallows who twitter as they flit in and out from the nest under the eaves. An unerring instinct has brought them to the old spot. The family instinct has moved them to build the strong mud walls lined with downy feathers. Presently the eggs are broken and the mother bird broods over her nestlings soon to fly. The picture makes him homesick for the courts of God. Where is there so safe a place for the children as the altar of the church?

A young father left the church for a petty grievance. Moving to the remote West he said he hoped he would never again hear a church bell. For many years that wish was gratified. He soon fell into the coarse vices of the mining camp. His wife sickened and died from overwork. She left little Mary, her namesake and her miniature. A half-breed nurse raised her. At ten she had never entered the day school or Sunday school. The reading of the eighty-fourth Psalm awakened a train of memories in the father's mind. The curse against the church was on his heart like the perpetual snow on the side of the Mount of the Holy Cross. Spring came and the snowy cross on his heart melted. He visited his wife's grave one evening when the great resolve came. He would build a chapel over her resting place. He would be a church worker again. He would redeem the manhood he had all but lost. The swallow found a nest for herself where she might lay her young. The motherless child found a church home. On the walls of the church is written Salvation; her gates are called Praise; her spire points to Heaven.

God's Little Doorkeeper. "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The language of this whole Psalm is restrospective. One of Korah's sons, now in exile with David, remembers the tabernacle where he ministered as a Levite, remembers the glad days when he and his brothers had charge of the tabernacle singers, remembers even back to his boyhood days when with other boys he served as a doorkeeper in the courses, and kept the gates of the tabernacle. He would rather serve God in that inconspicuous post than to be one of the wicked warriors plotting in their tents against God's anointed. One of those old days of boyhood secure in God's house, was better than a thousand in the dangers of exile.

This scene reminds us of another boy who ministered before the Lord, the obedient son of Hannah. The lad Samuel, girded with a linen ephod, and wearing the coat his mother's hands had made, kept the doors of the temple in Shiloh. He kept open the doors and he kept an open heart, for one night God called him from his bed and revealed to him the sin of Eli's sons who served as priests. From the humble service of a doortender Samuel rose to be the great prophet and statesman who anointed both Saul and David.

In the little village of Nazareth there dwelt a pious mother who took her boy each Saturday to the worship of the synagogue. And as Christ grew up I am sure there were fastened in his mind fond memories of that old Jewish meeting house. Years after He returned a man of thirty and on Saturday He went into the synagogue "as His custom was." The associations of childhood, the pull of memory, the power of habit acted even upon Christ. The mirthful feasts, the public entertainments, the lights and tinsel of the stage, the catchy airs of the ballroom pass away, for there is no substance in them. But the prayers of saintly men, the encouraging words and tender caresses of some white-haired mother in Israel, the stately old hymns such as "Jerusalem, the golden, with milk and honey blest," the heart-searching messages from the faithful pastor now gone to Heaven, the earnest talks by the Sundayschool teacher,—these touched our boyhood brow like the soft palm of an angel, and the sense of that impress cannot die.

Quiz and Study. 1. What boy ministered to Eli in the services of the tabernacle? 2. What three temples succeeded the tabernacle? 3. Of what did Peter heal the beggar at the beautiful gate of the temple? 4. How old was Jesus when He questioned the doctors in the temple? 5. What happened in the temple when Jesus was crucified?

the temple when Jesus was crucified?

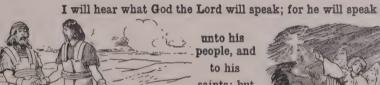
Challenge Text. "I had rather be a — in the

of my —, than to — in the — of —. Psa.

84:(%).

Practical Thoughts. 1. The God who gave the homing instinct to the bird placed the homing instinct in the soul. 2. The temple windows were built larger on the outside on the principle that light from within was to be shed out upon the dark world. 3. Spiritual progress is measured by heart longings, not by present place. Would you rather be a doorkeeper or a vagrant? 4. A good rule. Never enter a place of worship without offering a silent prayer for the worshippers and for those who minister there.

A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE



unto his
people, and
to his
saints: but
let them
not turn
again to
folly.
Surely his



is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.



are met together; righteousness and peace have



each other,



shall spring out of the earth; and



shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is



and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 85:1-13.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I listen to hear what You would speak, and ask for strength to do what You would approve. I want to be merciful towards my pets, towards all dumb animals, and towards my playmates. I want to be truthful to my parents, to my teachers, to my young friends, and to Thee. I want my life to be clean and righteous, doing nothing of which I am ashamed. And I want to dwell in peace with my neighbors, my brothers and sisters, and with Thee. For Thy dear sake, Amen.

"Oh, Claudia,
If thou couldst have seen the face of Him!

Never was such a conqueror! Yet no pride Was in it, * * * naught but love and tenderness, Such as we Romans scoff at, and His eyes

-L. M. Montgomery.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Bespake Him royal."

Historical Setting: The unknown author pictures the return from a captivity (verse 2) not unlike the Babylonian described by Ezra and Nehemiah. This unknown is a patriot taking a national view. He feels uncertain whether the exiles, despite their great distress and weakness, have learned their bitter lesson (verse 8). Mystically the Psalm teaches the principles of that government which Christ later established.

Scripture Setting: True National Grandeur. The return from captivity, Ezra 1:1-11. National injustice rebuked, Amos 5:4-15. The national Deliverer promised, Isa. 55:3-13. The return to right-

eousness, Luke 3:3-17. Temporal and spiritual prosperity, Psa. 144:5-15.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage teaches the influence of religion on a people's destiny. 1. National reformations consist in individuals getting right with God. 2. Prosperity is God's general gift to a Christian nation; blessedness is His special gift to His saints. 3. Much of national glory is vainglorious; a nation's real glory is the character it produces. 4. All truth that springs from the earth is from the Gospel seed. The ultimate harvest will be the conversion of the heathen. 5. The sifted, Christian seed first planted in America has produced piety, plenty and power.

THE NATION RESTORED.

Point of Contact. "I will hear what God will speak." Standing in the midst of the shattered fragments of a once glorious nation this lone prophetic figure has the courage to pray that there may be a complete restoration. Only a small part of the people as yet had stumbled back from the Babylonian captivity. A few had returned with Zerubbabel; a few more with Ezra and Nehemiah; but many still remained in Babylon, Media, Assyria, and Egypt. This unknown Psalmist goes as a prophet to consult the Lord, and waits an answer from the spirit of prophecy. God's answer is that salvation is nigh; that glory will soon dwell in his land. This meant that worship would be resumed, the temple would be rebuilt, and the Divine shechinah would reappear. But public prosperity would rest upon private piety.

How much this sounds like a recent editorial in the Wall Street Journal: "What America needs more than railway extension, and western irrigation, and a low tariff, and a bigger wheat crop, and a new navy, is a revival of piety, the kind mother and father used to have—piety that counted it good business to stop for daily family prayers before breakfast, right in the middle of the harvest; that quit field work a half hour early Thursday night so as to get the chores done and go to prayer meeting. That's what we need now to clean this country of the filth of graft, and of greed, petty and big, of worship of fine houses and big lands and high office and grand social functions. What is this thing we are worshipping but a vain repetition of what decayed nations fell down and worshipped just before their light went out?"

The Nation's Double Wedding. "Mercy and truth are met; righteousness and peace have kissed." Here are four Divine attributes which must be harmonized and incorporated in the life of every Christian nation. They easily lend themselves to a marriage scene. For two are masculine attributes, while the other two are complementary feminine attributes. Truth is a stalwart giant who carries a battle-axe. Strong of will and sure of his cause, he is not only respected but feared. Truth started forth on the warpath bent on making inquisition for sin. The human race feared him as the condemned merchant feared old Shylock demanding the pound of flesh nearest the heart. But Truth met Mercy on the way. She was the Portia with a heart of love. He loved her, for she was what he was not; was strong where he was weak. Mercy had started forth to plead for reconciliation between God and man. Truth and Mercy had their mutual claims, but when they met they blended them in common interest. They met in Jesus Christ. He made them one forever on Calvary's mount. So mankind was once afraid of Righteousness for he carried a shining sword and was the avenger of broken law. But Peace was a beautiful maiden sent from the throne of God to publish tidings of reconciliation. When Righteousness first looked upon Peace he embraced her for he knew she was intended to be his. Christ, our great High Priest, united them forever. The Gospel of reconciliation was proclaimed and the demands of a righteous law were met in His person and sacrifice. How the wedding bells of Heaven must have rung when God saw these four attributes harmonized in the salvation of men, Mercy, Truth, Peace, and Justice dwelling in perfect concord.

Heaven's Answer to Earth's Call. "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from Heaven." Scripture says that "deep calleth unto deep." The deepest in the heart of God answers to the deepest in the heart of man. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Thus spoke the wise man. But it is a wiser truth to say that what is in the heart of all good men finds a sure response from the heart of God. What great truths have sprung out of the earth; a hatred of human slavery despite its economical value; a horror for war even though its annals are gilded with glory; a hostility to alcohol though its license is merged with our taxes. God has never been without His witnesses on earth who contended for these reforms. Righteousness has looked down from Heaven and smiled on all these undertakings. Whenever truth is woven into our contracts, transactions, and promises, a righteous God pours upon us His blessing. There is a direct relation between moral rectitude and temporal prosperity.

Righteousness the Forerunner. "Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps." By the preaching of the law men are prepared to receive the grace of the Gospel. It was exactly this to which Paul referred when he said, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The pure and holy law of God must be proclaimed, and sinners must be made to feel that this broken law cries aloud for vengeance, before they will feel their need of a crucified Saviour. The message of John the Baptizer was one of stern and uncompromising righteousness. The crooked must be made straight. They must bring forth fruits worthy of repentence. Even now the axe

lieth at the root of the tree. The multitude cried, What then must we do? How he was setting men in the way of Christ's coming steps! But he would not accept their plaudits. "There cometh One that is mightier than I."

Reading the Bible will not give us a new heart. Nothing short of a personal faith in Jesus can work the miracle of conversion. But the righteous precepts of God may put us in the way of His steps. The sinner must put himself where God passes. Blind Bartimaeus was probably deaf as well as blind. When they urged him to be still he seemed not to have heard but cried the louder. When the Master called for him all seemed to have heard but himself. But with his shortcomings he pulled himself to the side of the street where he felt sure Jesus would pass. Whoever faithfully reads the Bible will sooner or later see Jesus pass and be healed. Zaccheus had his limitations which he felt only too well, but the heighth of the sycamore tree helped the shortness of his stature and secured the attention of Jesus. If we begin this very day to live the noblest, purest, most useful life of which we are capable we will be already walking in the way of His steps, and surprised as were the disciples on their journey to Emmaus we will find Jesus walking and communing with us.

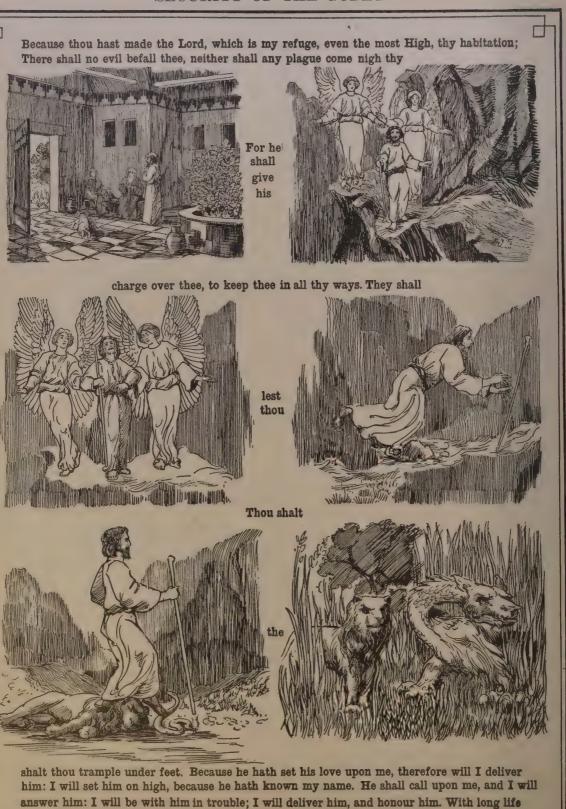
"The social Architects who build the state, Serving the Dream at citadel and gate, Will hail Him coming through the labor hum; And glad, quick cries will go from man to man, 'Lo, He has come, our Christ, the Artisan; The King who loved the lilies, He has come.'

Quiz and Study. 1. From what calamity had Israel just been spared? Whom did God use to deliver them? 2. What four cardinal virtues of Christ's kingdom are mentioned? 3. Mention some national evils against which Christ set His face. 4. What are the material and spiritual blessings promised as the result of a national awakening? 5. Name some countries shaken by national revivals in recent years.

Challenge Text. "Happy is that — that is in — a case; yea, — is that —, whose God is the —. Psa. 144:(?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Man's duty as well as privilege is to listen to God. America should heed God's Word "lest we forget." 2. Many nations more modern than Israel have foundered on the rocks of idolatry and apostasy. 3. Justice says, Strike the guilty; Love cries, Spare the man; Christ reconciles the two. 4. Peace arranged without justice cannot endure; mercy shown, inconsistent with truth, is equally unstable. 5. The Gospel of Jesus is the silken thread uniting the parts of the mantle torn by sin.

SECURITY OF THE GODLY



530

PSA. XCI: 9-16.

will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 91:1-16.

An Old Family Prayer: "Blessed Lord, take us into Thy protection this night, and preserve us from disease, from sudden death, from the violence of fire, from the edge of the sword, from the designs of wicked men, and from the influence of malicious spirits. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

"Put any burden upon me, only sustain me.
Send me anywhere, only go with me.
Sever any tie but the one that binds me
To Thy service and to Thy heart."

-Miss Brigham.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: This Psalm, undoubtedly David's, is full of martial imagery. Its spirit closely follows the 27th already studied. The pestilence mentioned in 2 Sam. 24 is the most probable occasion for it. The Targum treats it as a dialogue between David. Solomon and Jehovah.

Scripture Setting: God's Sure Defenses. 1. The pestilence stayed, 2 Sam. 24:10-17. 2. The saint's defense, Psa. 52:1-9. 3. Deliverance promised, Isa. 43:1-7. 4. Ministering angels, Matt. 4:1-11. 5. Unharmed by viper's bite, Acts 28:1-6. The seven assaults. Job 5:17-27.

Life and Conduct Setting: This passage sets forth the faithful love of the Keeper and the loving faith of the kept. 1. The path of duty, however forbidding, is the path of safety. 2. The truly honorable honor God's name, His day, His house, His word. 3. That house is safe protected by insurance from so strong a firm as Faith, Prayer and Obedience. The Divine protection involves body, household, property, reputation and soul. 5. God gives us two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet, but only one soul. Its loss, then, is irrecoverable.

THE SAFETY OF HIS SAINTS.

Point of Contact. "There shall no evil befall thee," Every schoolboy learns the story of Achilles. His mother dipped him as a child in the river Styx to make him proof against wounds. But holding him by the heel she left one small spot on his body that was vulnerable. Disguised as a girl he was reared with the king's daughters. A peddler with a sword and shield among his wares came one day. Just then an alarm was sounded, and the girls all fled, but Achilles seized the arms, proving himself a warrior. After many heroic adventures he advanced against the Scaean gate, when an arrow aimed by Paris struck his vulnerable heel and he fell, lamented by all Greece.

This ninety-first Psalm is called in the Talmud "a Song of Accidents" on the supposition that it possessed a protective power, like a charm or talisman, if sung in times of danger. It has been named "the Soldier's Psalm of Life" because it offers safety within the fortifications, on the battlefield, and amid devastating epidemics. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." (Verse 7.) This has been a favorite Psalm for soldiers to memorize.

Captain Hedley Vicars paid this tribute in a letter to a friend: "The little book of Psalms you gave me, I take with me whenever I go out for a walk. I have just learned by heart Psalm ninetyfirst, and it has filled me with confidence in Jesus." Here is safety against the arrows that fly in daylight, or the terrors of night attacks like those of Gideon; protection against the slanderous tongue as well as wasting disease; insurance against the perils of this life, and provision for an eternity of blessedness. There is absolutely no vulnerable heel, a target for hostile darts, since the child of God, bathed in His providential care, is immune to every carnal weapon.

The Protected Home. "Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." The teaching here is that God shall send His angels to guard the Christian home. In the Greek story of the Garden of the Hesperides there were four sisters sent to guard it, Brightness, Modesty, Love, and Service. Think what the modern home would be if these beautiful virtues were on guard. It would be as sweet and safe as the house in Bethany kept by the sisters Mary and Martha where Jesus was the guest. A general providence is over every home, but a special providence guards the Christian home. At midnight an angel visited every house in Egypt. From the first born of Pharaoh to the first born of the captive in the dungeon not one escaped save in the houses where he saw the blood upon the lintel and the door posts. The blood upon the door made that house safe from the destroyer. How graphically did the bloodmark foretell the love and sacrifice of Him who came long after to save our homes and bring every member of the family into affectionate relations with God.

The Guard of Angels. "He shall give His angels charge over thee." Angels are the agents of God's providence to the body and soul of man. Particularly were they the attendants of Christ in His incarnation, temptation, and resurrection. When Christ was exhausted by his fasting Satan comes to tempt Him to presumption by this very verse. Think of Satan with a Bible under his arm and a verse upon his lips! But angels come and minister to His worn body and weary mind. They came to Elijah in the hour of his discouragement and defeat. They are represented by Christ as attending

the footsteps of little children. They are represented in Heb. 1:14 as "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." The angels of God have an especial charge to accompany, defend, and preserve the Christian.

The Protected Warrior. "Thou shall tread upon the lion and adder and * the dragon." In the narrow defiles of Palestine the traveler often had no alternative left, but must destroy the obstacle in his way or in turn be destroyed. The Christian warrior at times must do more than defend himself; he must aggressively attack his spiritual foes. Some of our foes are as open as the lion who roars in the presence of his foe; some are the sly and insidious defamers that crawl in the grass; some are like the dragon, or sea monster which have no reality in fact, but are the phantom fears of the mind, the dark troubles that worry us but which we never overtake.

It is the asp rather than the adder which is mentioned in verse 13. It is a small but most venomous serpent found in Egypt and Libya for whose poison there is no known remedy. Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, chose to die this way, because death results in from three to eight hours without pain. The writer could hardly use stronger language to show that when the believer moves forward in the path of duty and in the line of truth he will be Divinely panoplied and fortified; poison will be harmless, the fire will not burn, and natural barriers will be brushed aside.

The Shield of Honor. "I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." The force of this verse is seen in 1 Sam. 2:30, "Them that honor me I will honor." The man that honors God will not only be placed in an advantageous position out of the reach of his enemy, but he will be honored and ennobled thereby.

In the old chapel of West Point Academy the walls are ornamented with white marble shields set high in the masonry. On every one is the name of some great American general of the Revolution. Because they had set their love upon their country and helped to deliver it, their country has set them on high. There is one sad exception. For one shield bears the words "Major General," and the date of the unnamed general's birth, but not his death. What does it mean? It means this one won a place, but not an honorable place. The nation would not cut Arnold's name there nor the date of his death. He denied his country; his country has denied him.

A Citadel of C's. "I will answer, be with him, deliver, honor, satisfy with long life.

and show him salvation." These are six great memorial stones that might be named: communion, companionship, conquest, character, continuance, and conversion. It reminds us of the great retreat pictured in Psa. 18:2, where Jehovah is called Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, God, Strength, Buckler, Horn, and High Tower. He affords us communion. Our desires, prayers, aspirations are not unheard nor unheeded. While we lisp God listens. He affords companionship. He went with Joseph into the pit, with Job to the ash heap, with David to the altar of penitence, with Daniel amid the lions, with Paul to the Roman prison. He provides for conquest. Deliverance from sin is the greatest deliverance. A famous painting of St. George is greatly enhanced by the fact that his foot is firmly planted on the dragon. So the glory of the Gospel is only enriched by the presence of evil, provided you have your foot on its neck. He stamps with character. The baser metal stamped with the king's likeness passes as coin of the realm. Character is the finished product of life, the rough ore redeemed by the refining processes of love and sacrifice. He promises continuance. Long life was the special promise of the Old Testament dispensation. (Deut. 32:46, 47.) He leads to conversion. In the offer of salvation it is more than probable that the Psalmist saw the coming of Jesus as the consummation of the Fatherly affection. So the Psalm most fittingly closes with the promise of a life that shall be happy and long and a death happy and serene that leads to endless life.

Quiz and Study. 1. What four separate acts of acknowledgment are mentioned as the cause and condition of the protection promised? 2. To which one of the commandments is linked the promise of long life? 3. What home was protected from a general destruction by a scarlet ccrd? 4. Where was Paul when miraculously preserved from the bite of a viper. 5. When in David's life did he attack and destroy a lion?

Challenge Text. "He that — in the — — of the — shall — under the — of the —. Psa. 91:(1).

Practical Thoughts. 1. God takes away the terrors of night, fear of fire, dread of robbers, disturbing dreams, and gives us instead "songs in the night." 2. Troubles may sweep across the sky of the believer, but there is a cyclone cellar, "the secret place," and a Presence near, "I will be with you." 3. To expect direction and guidance by guardian angels we must walk only where God has appointed them to fly. 4. There are stones as well as storms in life; the Almighty provides sandals as well as overshadowing wings. 5. How like an angel's visit, unseen and unrealized, are some of the gracious but mysterious providences. God was in the place and we know it not.

A SONG OF PRAISE



He hath not dealt
with us after our
sins; nor rewarded
us according to
our iniquities.
For as the

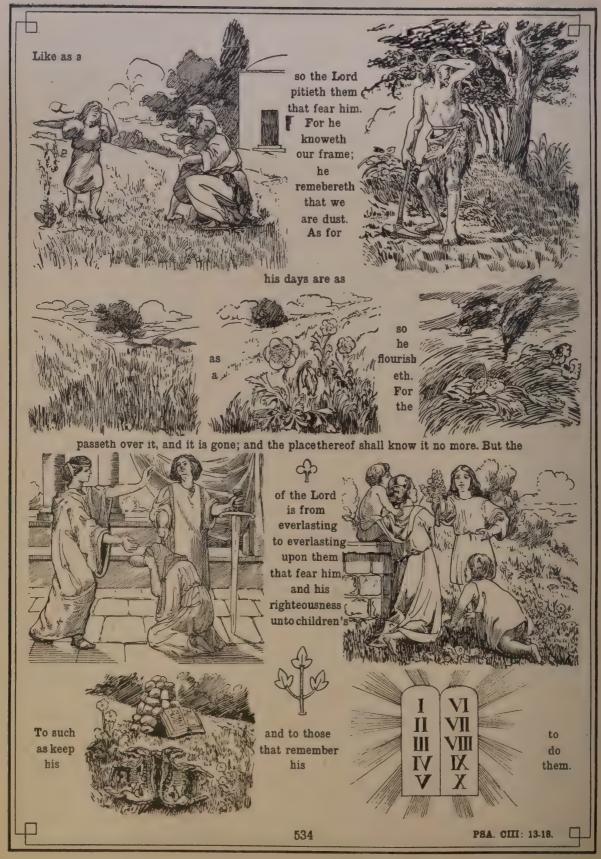


so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the



so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

PSA. CIII: 8-12.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 103:8-18.

Prayer: O God, Thou who art like a father, I would take time to count Thy many mercies. I thank Thee for giving me life; for sparing my life to this hour; for the promise of eternal life through Jesus, Thy Son. All of these benefits are of Thy mercy, not of my deserving. I am weak and full of faults, but Thou art slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Let me live to serve Thee, and praise Thee everlastingly. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

"The good man has a lowly mind; and to his God, Feeling the sense of his own littleness, Is as a child in meek simplicity.

What is the pomp of learning, the parade Of letters and of tongues? Even as the mists Of the grey morn before the rising sun, That pass away and perish."

-H. K. White.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: The Psalm is probably David's, and most closely fits the experiences mentioned in 2 Sam. 12:15-20.

Scripture Setting: Merciful Benefits for the Needy. The sanctuary for trouble, 2 Sam. 12:15-20. Forsaking God but not forsaken, Neh. 9:7-17. Human frailty and Divine security contrasted, Psa. 90:1-10. Strength of God for sons of men, Isa. 40: 21-31. Dimensions of Divine love, Eph. 3:8-21.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage praises

the Divine mercy that meets man's extremes. 1. God deals with many changing generations, all the generations deal with one changeless God. 2. To review the past thankfully is to advance hopefully. What God has done, He will do. 3. God's love can be compared with the father's in direction, but not in extent. God's love begins where the father's must end. 4. The cardinal directions of the cross are the height, depth, length and breadth of love.

MEASURELESS MAGNITUDE OF MERCY.

Point of Contact. Someone has called the rainbow "God's sunshine seen through nature's tears." Some of our most beautiful hopes and most glorious glimpses of Divine mercy come to us through the salty spray of human tears. Here is a Psalm of inimitable sweetness and excellence. We can best account for it as a rare rainbow of hope that sprung up in David's soul after the death of his baby boy. David had fasted and prayed during the child's sickness. All night long had he lain on the ground and watched by the side of the little sufferer. As he watched the babe's increasing weakness how the father heart was touched with pity for his helplessness! After seven days the servants whisper, and David knows the child is dead. Then he leaves the palace and takes himself to the house of God to worship. Was it not a strange time to write a Psalm of praise? I think it was the very time to stir the gift of song within him. Never had he realized before how much he loved his child. And it reminded him how much God loved His weak and soul-sick child. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth." In prosperity David forgot to count his blessings, but after losing so much he could "forget not all His benefits" that remained. Just as we can see the prismatic colors in the rainbow after the storm, so David could see in his affliction the variegated threads of mercy he had never seen before.

That the mercies of God are magnified by bereavement is seen in the experience of others beside David. It was a life habit with John Angell James to read the 103rd Psalm at the family altar every Saturday night of his life. But on the Saturday evening of the week in which Mrs. James died he

called his motherless children around him, hesitated for a moment with the open Bible in his hand, and then quietly said, "Children, I have read these verses all my life, but now I see new meaning in the words, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.''

Three Tenses of Divine Mercy. 1. The present tense, or sense of conscious possession. "The Lord is merciful and gracious." Some songs celebrate a golden age long past, some a Heavenly state to be revealed, but this song celebrates the present joys of salvation. We have needed God in the past, we will need Him in the future, but it is certain we need Him now. He is "a very present help in time of trouble."

- 2. The past tense, or the proof of experience. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins." Religious experience is worth all it costs. God's past dealings with us reveal His faithfulness and encourage us to believe in Him, or as Paul puts it, "Experience worketh hope." In God's unchangeableness we have a right to reason that because He has helped us hitherto He will continue as our Helper.
- 3. The future tense, or the prospect of trials removed. "He will not always chide." In the kindergarten corrective methods are employed because punishment is necessary. But it is in the hope that we will put away childish things. As we learn that fire will burn, that disobedience brings punishment, so we must learn that sin brings a harvest of misery. When we have attained unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, we will have matured into ripeness for Heaven, where sin, and sorrow, and sighing are done away.

Two Dimensions of Divine Mercy. 1. The infinite reach of mercy. "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy. I think that the stars that gem the night serve a higher purpose than giving physical light. They are flying trapezes from the roof of God's gymnasium on which human minds can cling to swing themselves through the universe. I will not attempt to say how high the heaven is above the earth. It measures millions of miles to some of our nearer stars, but the more remote the new stars discovered, the higher grows our sense of Divine wisdom and love. They are God's signal lamps hung on high. "In every star Thy glory shines." The infinite reach of Divine mercy can also be measured by considering the heights from which Christ came, and the depths of the humility and shame to which He plunged to redeem a race. "He endured the cross, despising the shame." No man is so far down in the scale of respectability but that He who died between malefactors has power to lift him up.

2. The infinite latitude of forgiveness. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." God's mercy has been likened to a circle because it begins everywhere, and ends nowhere. On every sphere there are north and south poles, so that distance in either of these directions is measureable, being in the case of the earth about 12,000 miles from pole to pole. But a man may continue to travel either east or west indefinitely. The force of this illustration, then, is to emphasize the illimitable distance to which God has removed the iniquities of His people. It may also represent the latitude of forgiving love. When Jesus was asked how many times a disciple should forgive his brother, His answer was, "Until seventy times seven." This multiplication of the perfect number meant infinity. If we imitate the forgiveness of God we never reach the last time.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind,"

When Alexander camped before a city he set up a light. So long as it burned his enemies might have quarter, but after it was put out no mercy need be expected. The mercy and patience of God to sinners extends on year after year, generation after generation.

Infinite Mercy Measured by Finite Fatherhood.

"Like as a father pitieth, so the Lord pitieth." The justice of the eternal King is tempered by the mercy of the eternal Father. Ancient history tells us of a kingdom in which certain crimes were punished by burning out the criminal's eyes. It so happened that the only son of the king was found guilty of such a crime, and it became the father's duty to pronounce the stern sentence on his son. In doing so he fell back upon the well-known principle of substitution. Two good eyes should be given to uphold the majesty of law, but one should be his son's, the other should be his own. The king was disfigured, but the son was left his sight. So by the principle of substitution the Divine King suffered in the stead of the sinner. Only He bore all the penalty upon the tree. Isaiah declares, "He was marred more than the sons of men." The marvelous pity of God is enough to break the heart of stone.

The human soul can depend upon God "like as a father." When He calls we know it is Father's voice; when we would fall it is Father's arms that are underneath us.

Two men were talking by the gate when two lads returning from school drew near. One of the men suggested an experiment. He lifted one of the boys, his own son, to the top of a post some six feet from the ground, and stepping back two paces, held out his arms and asked the lad to leap. Withheld out his arms and asked the lad to leap. out fear and without harm he jumped into his father's arms. The second boy was lifted upon the post, and although he had the advantage of the other's example, he could not be persuaded to make the trial. The boys were equally courageous, but one had the added confidence of knowing he was leaping into his own father's arms. What a sense of security in calamity, in temptation, to know He stands beneath us "like as a father." "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." It was a great source of human comfort to Christ to know that His human mother, Mary, was beneath His cross so full of tender pity. But what a sense of Divine comfort to know also that His Divine Father stood there ready to uphold Him. Death to Him was no "leap into the dark" as He confidently whispered, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Quiz and Study. 1. What two characters in the Old Testament may be said to wear the crown for patience? 2. What elements in this lesson teach the need of humility? 3. What merciful act did David show towards one of Saul's relatives? 4. What do you consider the greatest picture ever written on fatherly kindness? 5. What parable of Christ's most strongly shows the mercy man should show to man?

Challenge Text. "Thou art a God ready to —, and —, slow to —, and of great —." Neh. 9:(9).

Fractical Thoughts. 1. Each kingdom in nature feeds upon a kingdom unlike itself. Man requires of God that which he cannot himself supply. 2. Mercy reached its high water mark in this world when Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them." 3. The spiritual benefits of Divine mercy are conditioned upon the fear of God and the remembrance of His commandments. 4. God does not regulate His mercy by our merit; one transcends the other as the heavens the earth.

PILGRIM SONGS

I will lift up mine eyes unto the



from
whence
cometh
my help.
My help
cometh
from
the Lord,
which made



He will not suffer thy



to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor



The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy



upon thy right hand. The



shall not smite thee by day, nor the



by night.
The Lord
shall
preserve
thee
from all



he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy

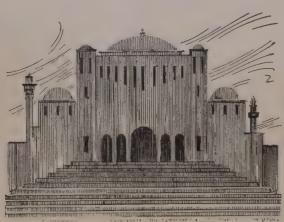




from this time forth, and even for evermore.

PILGRIM SONGS

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the



Our feet shall stand



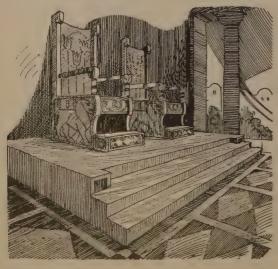
O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a



that is compact together: Whither the tribes



the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set



of judg-ment, the thrones of the house of



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 121 AND 122.

Prayer: O Lord, Thou art my Help and my Keeper. In the watches of the night while I slumber Thine eyelids know no sleep; when the sun with fiery heat would beat upon my head Thou art my shade upon my right hand; the soul committed to Thee shall know no evil; when I go forth in the morning, as when I return to my home at the close of the day, I am in Thy care. In all life's pilgrimages overshadow me, and keep all those who travel with me, until at last we reach the city on the heights, the New Jerusalem, and our tired feet stand within Thy gates. In Jesus' name, Amen.

"Sing on, ye joyful pilgrims,
Nor think the moments long;
My faith is Heavenward rising
With every tuneful song.
Lo! on the Mount of blessing,
The glorious Mount I stand,
And looking over Jordan,
I see the promised land!"
—Carrie M. Wilson.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: The author and time of these two Psalms are uncertain. They belong to the fifteen Psalms of Ascent, so called, either because sung by the caravans of Jews in their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate the three national feasts, or possibly because one Psalm was chanted on each of the fifteen marble steps leading up from the court of the women to that of the men.

of the women to that of the men.

Scripture Setting: The Sacred City, the Seat of Religion. Founding of the city of David, 2 Sam. 5:1-12. The city on the heights, Isa. 49:8-18. The city restored, Zech. 8:3-12. Mount of Divine blessheights, the New Jerusalem, and our tired feet stand

Life and Conduct Setting: These passages represent life as a pilgrimage to the City of God. 1. The religious impulse is personal in origin, but social in operation. Not for my sake, but "for my brethren and companions' sakes." 2. Every time we invite another our religious joys are multiplied. 3. We journey forward by families, communities, tribes and nationalities, but we stand before God at last as individuals. 4. It is our duty to pray that the onward march of church and country be towards the City of God. 5. Every time we go to church we add to the testimony of Israel.

TRAVELING TOWARDS THE CITY OF GOD.

Point of Contact. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." How the high heathen fortress of Jebus was transformed into "the city of David," "the lair of the lion of Judah" is an interesting story of battle. David, the young king, wished for a rocky height centrally located and easily fortified where he could build his capital. He found that Jebus, still held by the original inhabitants, was an inaccessible location, perched high above the surrounding country, and guarded by deep ravines. He wanted it, and promised the highest office, chieftain of the army, to the soldier who dared to scale the precipice. Joab clambered up the cliff, dashed the defenders down, and was proclaimed captain of the host. Beyond any other important city that ever existed Jerusalem was to be built by David as a mountain city.

"Whither the tribes of the Lord go up." What must have been the impression made upon the boy Jesus, "the Son of David," as climbing the circling road from Jericho and Bethany He approached Jerusalem from the east! I like to think of Him in that vast caravan of Galilaean pilgrims on their way to the feast. It was late in April and the road was studded with the blue and purple and scarlet of innumerable flowers. They traveled gaily along on the backs of mules, horses, asses, and camels. The boys sometimes walked and played by their parents'

sides, getting a lift when tired, on horse or mule. They paused sometimes to refresh themselves with dates and melons, or to gather up from the streams fresh water in their leather bottles. They traveled by families and communities, and the road was enlivened by mirth and music. When the way grew tedious the sound of drums and timbrels lent them cheer. After three or four days of such travel they enter the cool, deep defiles of the mountains, and in anticipation of the coming view of the temple with its gilded roof and marble colonnades, they begin to sing the ancient songs of the pilgrims, the songs of ascent.

The Keeper of the City. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Jews believed that in a special sense Jehovah presided over the destinies of Jerusalem. This is seen in the opening of another pilgrim song, Psa. 127, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." If the pilgrim bands were anywhere in the vicinity of the holy city they eagerly pushed forward in the hope that they could "stand within the gates" before sunset, the hour when the gates were closed. The sacred ark, "the testimony of Israel," was kept in the holy of holies and was believed to make the city inviolate from attack or pestilence. The heathen had their local gods in various shrines and their manmade idols, but the Jew was convinced that

Jehovah kept Jerusalem by day and by

We owe much to the Jew for what he has taught us of religious truth, but we have a larger thought of God than this local and national view. In our "going out" and our "coming in," in the blinding heat of the day, as well as in the darkness when wild beasts prowl, on the land and on the sea, in things temporal as truly as in things spir-

itual, "the Lord is thy keeper."

The Compact Character of the City. "As a city that is compacted together." The deep ravines bordering the table land on which the original Jerusalem was built are not more than half a mile apart. When David chose this spot it occupied neutral ground between the two chief tribes, Judah and Benjamin. So that the location of the city physically had very much to do with the unification of the tribes. "There are set thrones of judgment." The internal government was greatly unified by establishing at Jerusalem a judicial court. Each tribe was represented by a counsellor. The king also had a council of wise men, the most famous of whom was Ahithophel. "Whither the tribes go up." The effect of these annual pilgrimages on the educational and social life of Israel can hardly be estimated. It meant a constant interchange of ideas and sympathies. It meant a bright spot in memory to recall the enthusiasm of the vast processions impelled by a common purpose, moving towards the center of national wor-

"The tribes of the Lord." Religion, as the very meaning of the word suggests, binds and solidifies. The temple worship became the life of the people in epitome. Around them were peoples who believed in many gods, but as these pilgrims by holy vows bound themselves to Jehovah, the one true God, they unconsciously bound themselves to each other. Israel is unique among nations in having a capital within such narrow compass that exerted so wide an influence to bind together a whole people polit-

ically, socially and religiously.

The anicent Jerusalem in several particulars may well stand as the symbol of the New Jerusalem which John saw let down out of Heaven. As there were the deep ravines forming natural barriers to the city of David, so in Christ's parable we are told that after death there was between the faithless Dives and the poor, but faithful beggar "a great gulf fixed: so that they that would pass from hence to you cannot." As Jerusalem, the seat of religion, unified the nation, so the New Jerusalem by the principle of holiness shall unify those that are gathered out of every nation and tribe and tongue. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." The pure in heart shall see God. The footsore pilgrims of Israel and Judah looked eagerly forward to the rest of the sanctuary as they climbed the steep ascent. As pilgrims here we climb the heights of life with the gladdening thought that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

The Companionships of the City. "For my brethren and companions' sakes I will say, Peace be within thee." The pilgrim Psalmist praises the city on the heights for its social joys, its renewed companion-The religships, its communion of saints. ious joy is contagious and socialistic. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

There is no place in the Lord's prayer for a man to pray for himself alone. Every time a Jew went into the temple and really prayed he gained a nation-wide view of life. The pity was he did not get a broader view. For we are God-like only when we get a view of the world-field. Israel's neighbors had little local gods, gods of tribes and towns. Israel had a conception of God no larger than the bounds of Palestine. But Christ came to give us this new definition of neighbor. He is the man that needs us most. He came to tell us that God gave His Son because He loved the world. It is our privilege to invite all mankind to journey with us toward the city of God, "old men, and babes, and loving friends, and youths and maidens gay."

"Rest comes at length, though life be long and

dreary; The day must dawn, and darksome night be past;

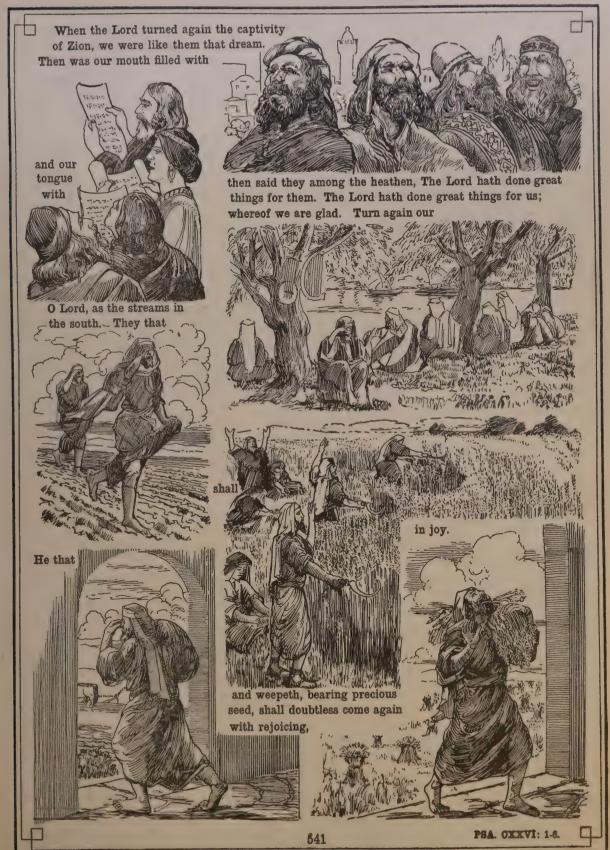
All journeys end in welcome to the weary And Heaven, the heart's true home, will come at last."

Quiz and Study. 1. How many cities of refuge were established, and for what purpose? 2. State which are the Psalms of ascent and why so named. 3. What Roman general conquered Jerusalem after the time of Christ? 4. To celebrate what feast did Jesus join the pilgrim band from Nazareth? 5. What were the names of the twelve tribes? 6. What song did the children sing during Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem?

Challenge Text. "Great is the -, and greatly to

be — in the — of our —, in the mountain of His —." Psa. 48:(?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. We will be judged not by our starting point, but the direction and the company in which we travel. 2. The walls that guard our modern city are patriotism, education, which is a property of the prope civic pride, and righteousness. 3. Heaven is glad when father, mother and children fill the family pew. 4. The reunions of Heaven afford a joyful thought, but there is the joy of communion and companionship all along the journey thither. 5. Every Sabbath rightly observed is a holy mount of privilege where tired pilgrims feast on spiritual songs and Scripture promises.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 126:1-6.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, We thank Thee for coming to earth to publish the glad news of deliverance. Thou hast done great things for us; whereof we are glad. May our hearts be filled with singing and with gratitude. Help us to scatter the precious seed of the Gospel in the morning as well as in the evening of life. If we sow in tears, may we reap in joy. And bring us at last, our sheaves in our hand, to the blessedness of Thy harvest home. Amen.

"The seed will surely live.
The seed will surely live.
The' great the cost, it is not lost,
For God will fruitage give.
The harvest-home of God will come,
And after toil and care,
With joy untold your sheaves of gold,
Will all be garnered there."
—Jessie H. Brown.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: A Psalm composed by Haggai and Zechariah to celebrate the decree issued by Cyrus permitting the Jewish exiles to return and rebuild their city and temple.

Scripture Setting: Glad Release of Captives. The decree of Cyrus, Ezra 1:1-11. Israel torn and healed, Hosea 6:1-11. The exiles return, Isa. 66:18-24. Jerusalem rebuilt, Jer. 31:1-9. National prosperity restored, Joel 3:1-8, 17-20. The decree of Christ, Luke 4:14-22.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage suggests the homecoming song of the reapers. 1. The rude

forces of poverty, misfortune and necessity drive us from our mount of security, but develop ambition, experience and confidence. 2. Divine goodness draws the whole round circle of our going forth and our return. 3. The commonplace blessings of the present would look golden through the atmosphere of distance and separation. 4. The good seed develops and multiplies amid hard conditions. 5. The song of the harvest-home is the consciousness we have added to the world's real wealth. 6. The song of the angels published the edict that man was free.

GOSPEL SEED AND SHEAVES OF GOLD.

Point of Contact. In our last lesson we left the chosen people of God rejoicing in the security of their capital city Jerusalem. In this lesson we find they have been carried into Babylon and held in exile there for more than fifty years. Now new soil may be as beneficial to the life of a people as it is to the life of a plant. Divine wisdom has provided the seeds of various plants with wonderful formations by which, independent of man, they are transported by the wind from localities where they have run out to new localities where their former vigor returns. You have seen the seed of certain grasses traveling across the country like a ball blown by the wind. After a little thought I think you can see how the Divine wisdom suffered His chosen people to be carried far away from their own little country by the winds of fierce persecution that it might strengthen their own life and plant among heathen people the true worship.

The Storm-Scattered Seed. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion." It is possible to trace a Divine philosophy in Judean history as well as in the growth and spread of Christianity. God saves and multiplies the good seed not by hoarding it, but by sowing it broadcast over the earth. To plant His church everywhere He makes use of a variety of means. Through widening commerce, by the exploration of new continents, in the interests of scientific investigation, He has scattered His seed, the children of the Kingdom. It was persecution that scattered the seed of the early church. When the first disciples were in-

clined to remain too long in Jerusalem, forgetting they were commissioned to preach the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, "and they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." In missionary fields the greatest triumphs have followed the bitterest persecutions. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

How dark was that midnight when Nebuchadnezzar's army made a breach in the walls of Jerusalem and Zedekiah the king saw that all was lost. Within a month both the temple and the palace were destroyed by fire, the sacred vessels were carried away to adorn the temples of Babylon, and the king was on his way to have his eyes burned out. But all was not lost. Without a temple and without their stated sacrifices, they turned for comfort to the more spiritual elements of the Mosaic institutions. There still remained common memories, common hopes, and a common faith. They diffused wherever they went a knowledge of the true God. They prepared their own nation and other nations for the dispensation of the Gospel.

The Seed in Heathen Soil. "Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." The liberty which followed the edict of Cyrus was so unexpected, so extraordinary and miraculous, that the heathen peoples all about were led to ponder upon the power of this great Jehovah. They contrasted their own manmade idols with the God to whom the captives of Judea prayed.

Perhaps the greatest impact on the heathen mind, however, was what the Babylonians learned of the great things the Lord had done for the Jews in keeping their faith steady in persecution. If the purity of their domestic life and the enthusiasm of their religious life so deeply impressed Cyrus, how the great mass of heathen hearts must have been touched by a contact that lasted for more than fifty years.

In the great movement of modern missions we depend not so much on miracles to move the heathen mind as upon the unselfish love that gleams in the missionary's heart. Fifty years ago a young man, slight and alone, went out from very near the spot where this is being written to face three hundred millions in India. Now he has returned from that heathen soil, weary and spent, but not until he saw 153,000 in his church and 43,000 youth in his church These results of the Gospel sower are largely the effect of Christian living on heathen hearts.

> "O let us find the ancient way, Our wondering foes to move, And force the heathen world to say, See how these Christians love!"

-Chas. Wesley.

The Spirit-Sifted Seed. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed. The sower saves from the previous year's supply the best wheat for the seed. This involves the sifting process. Now the captivity was God sifting the Hebrew nation. Israel had fallen into apostacy and Judah into idolatry. During the captivity those who were of weakened faith lost their national identity, either through intermarriage or becoming permanently attached to the political destinies of Persia and Babylon. Those who did return to rebuild the city and the temple were deeply patriotic and devout. Here was the blood that was to produce the leaders, the teachers, the prophets, the priests, and the kings of God's own peculiar people. The experience was bitter, but it was needful. They returned a chastened but a holy people. Says one historian, "The captivity ended in the colonization of Palestine with a fresh and more thoroughly cultured population, who volunteered with pious zeal to lay anew the foundations of the Hebrew polity." It was indeed "precious seed" because so little, and upon it so much depended. Judah was now like a farmer who had passed through a long famine. He had saved but a little seed over against the springtime sowing. With a sorrowful heart he goes forth carrying his all, his precious seed, and consigns it to the furrows, watering it with his tears and imploring the bless-

ing of God. And because he feels so deep a dependence upon God he is safe. The handful of returning Israelites shall see a

joyful reaping.

The Song Amid the Sheaves. "He shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." There is something indescribably joyous about a harvest home. Only he who makes the early sacrifices and stave by the standing grain can expect to ride in at last upon the golden sheaves shouting the harvest home.

William Wilberforce gave his voice and impassioned personality for thirty years in advocating the freedom of Great Britain's slaves. His health broke, his evesight failed, but he did not cease. But in old age to him was verified the promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." In 1830, on the morning of the first of August, the slaves of the West Indian colonies came into the

possession of their freedom.

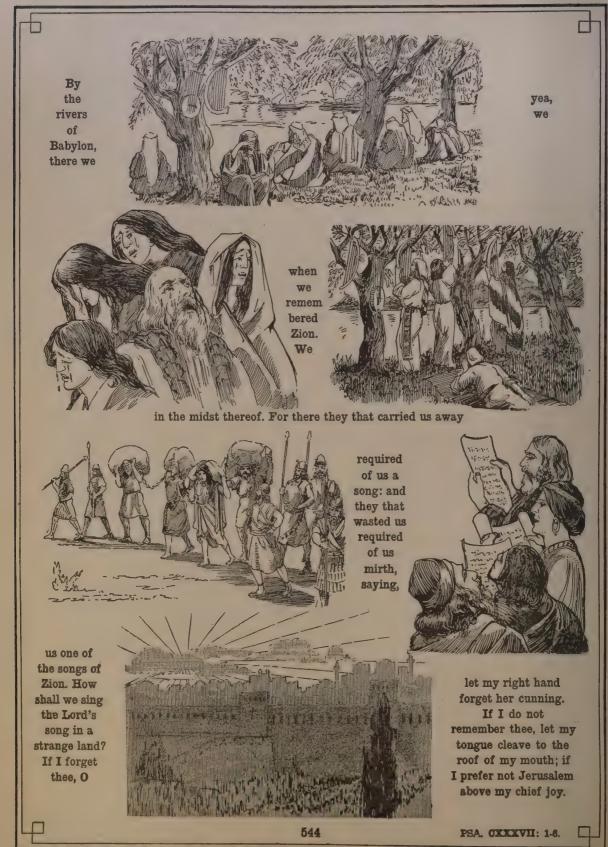
Thousands upon thousands of them never went to bed the night before, but assembled in their places of worship, engaging in devotions and spending the last hours of the night in singing praises to God. They had stationed some upon the hills, from which they might obtain the first glimpse of the day of their redemption. By a signal they were to proclaim to their fellows below that the light was breaking on the hills. that they might shout for joy, for they were no longer goods and chattels, but men, men with souls that God created to live for ever. When the aged Wilberforce heard of this remarkable manifestation he lay back upon his bed and said, "I am satisfied."

What was done for the physical freedom of man by Moses in Egypt, by Cyrus in Persia, by Wilber-force in England, and by Lincoln in America, Christ did for the spiritual freedom of all. Much of His sowing was done in tears. As He wept over the unrepentant city, Jerusalem seemed a flinty soil. But Isaiah, who saw the coming of Cyrus and hailed it with delight, saw also the coming of Christ and His great deliverance. "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. 53:10, 11.)

Quiz and Study. 1. What important works did the decree of Cyrus encourage? 2. What remaining Psalm deals with this same period? 3. What causes led to the captivity? 4. What prophet fore-told the return of the people and the vessels of gold? 5. In what respects is Cyrus a forerunner of Christ?

Challenge Text, "He hath sent me to — the Gospel to the —; He hath sent me to — the —, to preach deliverance to the -. Luke 4:(1).

Practical Thoughts. 1. For all that God has done we should render acknowledgment by taking the cup of salvation to others. 2. The Lord turned the captivity, though He prompted Cyrus to give the commission to return. 3. We are to pray so long as there are any left in captivity. 4. Not until the chaff was sifted away could Christ use Peter. 5. The Pilgrim fathers were sifted seed. They sowed in hardships, we reap in prosperity.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PSALMS 137:1-6.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I thank Thee for the freedom I enjoy, for the good land of my parentage, for the blessed friendships of Thy church. I thank Thee for Thy wondrous Word, for the joyful songs of the Psalmist, for the vision of the prophet, for the loving zeal of the disciples, and above all for the golden truth of the Master. Not as a stranger and an exile, but as a child in my Father's house, I sing the songs of the sanctuary; may I never forget them, but sing them forever and ever. Amen.

"Shake off the dust that blinds thy sight. And hides the promise from thine eyes: Arise and struggle into light, The great Deliverer calls, Arise! "Shake off the bands of sad despair: Zion, assert thy liberty; Look up, thy broken heart prepare, And God shall set the captive free."

THE LESSON IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: The author is unknown. It was composed at the close of the Babylonian cap-tivity, probably by a Levite of the first company of returned captives.

Scripture Setting: The Affliction of Zion. Judea transplanted, Ezek. 17:3-7, 12-14, 22-24. Punishment of captivity, Jer. 32:27-38. Letter to the captives, Jer. 29:1-14. Zion in sorrow, Lam. 1:1-12. The Avenger of Edom, Isa. 63:1-9.

Life and Conduct Setting: This passage gives a

pathetic picture of the Psalmist's harp unstrung. 1. The Christian on earth is in a strange land. Our holiest thoughts naturally associate with sacred places. 3. The heart cannot sing in sorrow, yet the song of another may heal it. 4. All things have an eternal fitness; the song and the sigh have their place. 5. The Psalms voice the whole wide gamut of life, from strains of pathetic sadness to exultant notes of deliverance.

THE SILENT HARP ON THE WEEPING WILLOWS.

Point of Contact. We now take up our last lesson in the Psalms and the one assigned for our study is one of the very last that was written for the psalter. We have thought of the whole book of Psalms as the music room of the Bible. We are loathe to leave it, for here we have heard wondrous notes as the Psalmist with his cunning right hand has swept over the strings. But now he is in exile in Babylon. The song dies in his soul. He would pray that his good right hand might be paralyzed if he should forget the dear country and its temple he had left behind. There is no inspiration to sing or to play.

The Home Unappreciated. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down." Four walls do not make a home. An exile, however housed, is homeless. These Jewish exiles in the latter part of the captivity, we may suppose, were treated kindly. During the reign of Evilmerodach it is said that king Jehoiachin took precedence over all the subject kings at the table of the Babylonian monarch; that the unfortunate king of Judah was allowed to change his prison garments for robes that looked very much like the royal ones he had once worn in Jerusalem. After he reached manhood he married the beautiful Susannah and lived in a sumptuous house with fair gardens. Some of the choicest spirits of the nation were among these captives. The land was a rich and beautiful land. Babylon had her hanging gardens that were world famous. And Babylonia had her great rivers, the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Chebar, and the Ulai. Ezekiel had his own home near Baby- l

lon where he dwelt with his wife and guided the counsels of the small Jewish community on the banks of the Chebar. But his heart was not in the land of exile, but "in the land of his nativity." Across the rich garden of that fertile region, across the vast Euphrates, across the intervening desert, his spirit and the spirit of all his countrymen still yearned towards Jerusalem, still lived in the temple courts where once he had ministered. By the rivers of Babylon they sat down in dejection, not because they had no home, but because these patriots saw beyond the horizon the goodly Jerusalem they had left behind.

The Heart Afflicted. "We wept when we remembered Zion." As Ezekiel with others wandered through the vast halls of Assyrian palaces it brought to mind the one-time splendor of Jerusalem in sad contrast with its present desolation. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!" History and poetry alike are full of descriptions of the holy city and they agree that it presented a picture of dazzling splendor. Its massive walls, its iron gates, its protecting towers challenged the world. about Zion, go round about her, tell the towers thereof; mark well her bulwarks." Of all the cities of Palestine Jerusalem alone was a city of palaces. The Psalmist could describe it only in exalted language, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the world earth is Mount Zion." It is small comfort now for the exiles to remember that it has become a city of ruins. They could never forget that day when the temple, the palace and the houses of the nobles were deliberately set on fire. The framework of the city twisted in the writhing agony of the flame and smoke. The walls and gates seemed to lament and cry as they sank in ashes. Even the two beautiful pillars of the temple that had passed uninjured through many former devastations with their delicate ornamentation were broken in pieces and the parts carried away as souvenirs by the conquerors. No wonder Jeremiah cries, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow that hath been done unto me?" The holy city was gone. All that was left was an undying love in the hearts of the exiles.

The Harp Unstrung. "We hanged our harps upon the willows." The weeping willows were very plentiful in Babylonia. Perhaps it was on a Sabbath day that a little group of the exiles made their way to the "riverside, where prayer was wont to be made." It is suggested that they sing one of the songs of Zion. The harps are taken up and strung and perhaps one of David's joyful songs announced. But as the little company is reminded of other Sabbath days when in glad company they went up the temple steps there is no heart left within them. With one consent the harps are unstrung and hung on the willow bushes as the worshipers give freedom to the grief they can no longer control.

What was it that unstrung the Hebrew harp and left the worshipers weeping beneath the willows? Their sad condition was due to disobedience. Religion does not encourage sorrow, but is in the world to heal our sorrows. Sorrow comes to nation and individual when the restraints of religion are broken. When was it that David played upon his harp the soothing strains that cured Saul of his insanity? It was when his heart was pure and his faith strong. When was it he fasted and sorrowed and hung away his harp? It was when he had done wrong and God was punishing his soul? The harp was made to be sounded and the soul was made to sing.

There is a fable that Orpheus played so sweetly on his lyre that the stones began to move in harmony, and coming together were formed into the ancient city of Thebes. But in the ruins of Herculaneum was found a fragment that has interpreted this fable. Orpheus was said to be a musician employed by the laborers, playing to them during their toil, making their work seem so light that the city was built as by the magic of music. Now re-ligion is such a musician, supported by the workmen themselves, going with them to their tasks, singing in their hearts, supplying courage and inspiration, helping to build the modern city.

The Hand Unhurt. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let may right hand forget her cunning." It would appear that the Assyrians had heard of the religious songs of the Hebrews, and they wished to make use of their captives by compelling them to sing their native songs as a pastime at one of their heathen feasts. It was not only unreasonable to ask a captive people to be mirthful in their captivity, but it was insulting to ask that holy ordinances should be prostituted to idolatrous practices. Patriotism and religion alike blazed up in opposition. If they did not remember their country and their God above all else, then let the right hand with which they struck the strings of the harp be withered away. Such beautiful and noble language shows that they were slaves only to circumstances, but that their souls were free. The right hand is the symbol of the freeman's strength. With it he votes in the public assembly, and with it he casts his ballot in matters of government. It is the member most honorable and most profitable. But God's true freeman would rather sacrifice its strength than surrender patriotism or religion. To have played upon the harp under those circumstances would have been to dishonor his skilful right hand, making him a destroyer of his country, his people, and his religion. But the right hand that would not destroy was soon busy in building. The hand was busy, not with the harp, but with the hammer. The temple was rebuilt by heroism and sacrifice.

After the eruption of Mount Pelee there was found on the margin of the lava flood a human hand. It belonged to a woman of noble birth. She had escaped but returned to save an orphan girl. She pushed the girl beyond the fiery stream to safety but perished herself. The girl lived to tell that story of heroism. The woman of wealth lost all but her hand that was reached forth to save.

Quiz and Study. 1. Whose coming has prophecy seen typified in the coming of Cyrus In what respects are these two conquerors alike? 2. What reasons could the exiles give for not singing in Babylon? 3. What queen refused to be made a spectacle at a banquet? 4. What is the complete number of the Psalms? How many have we studied? 5. State in what ways you think these lessons have benefited you.

Challenge Text, "Afterwards shall the — of — return, and seek the Lord their — and — their

return, and seek the Lord their —, and — their King; and shall fear the — and His goodness in the latter days.'' Hos. 3:(1).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Slavery of the body is exile; slavery of the mind is ignorance; slavery of the soul is sin. 2. There are harps in Heaven, but no weeping willows. 3. What great souls have been tested by exile: Abraham, Moses, Daniel, John. 4. The charm of the Psalms is a religious charm, their highest beauty the beauty of holiness.

REV. THOS. B. ROBERTS.

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON BY DORE

Solomon, David's son, was king of Israel, and all the world was moved by the fame of his wisdom. It was customary for rulers to receive their subjects, at certain hours, and render them justice. There came before Solomon two women, who had been living in one house, and no one else lived there; these two alone. Each of them became a mother at nearly the same time. But the mother of the second of these babes smothered it by accident because in her sleep she overlaid it. So she arose in the night and exchanged the babes, placing her dead babe in the arms of the other woman, and taking the living babe to herself. In the morning, when the mother of the first babe attempted to nurse the one she held, it was found to be dead. Of course, she claimed her own, living babe. Thus they disputed over the circumstance and together they took their case to King Solomon, who was sitting in the seat of judgment. After due deliberation Solomon understood well the conditions.

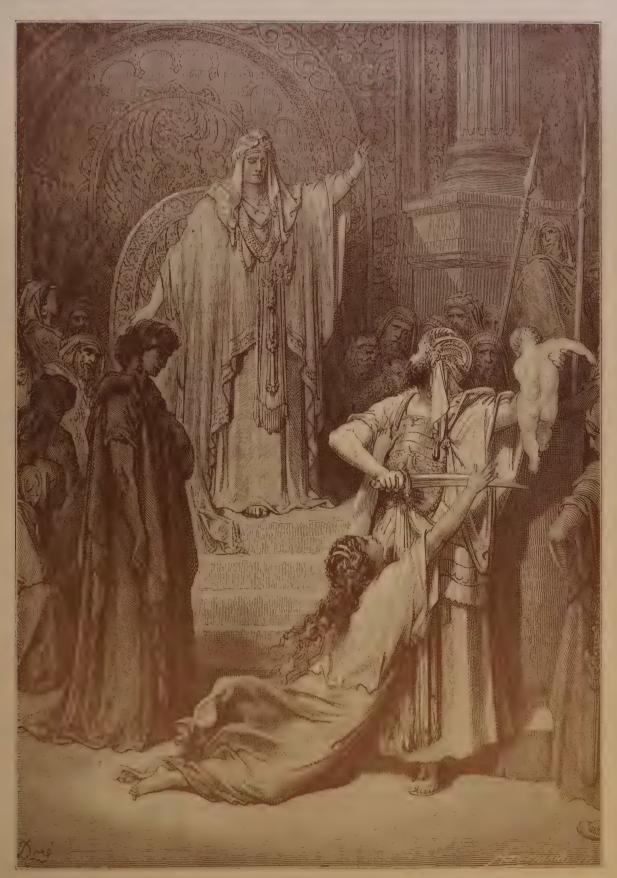
Judging human nature, the king knew well that the real mother could be made to prove her case by her actions. He called for an attendant with a sharp sword, and ordered that the living babe be cleft in two, and one-half given to each mother. At this critical moment, one of the mothers threw herself on the executioner and begged that the babe be given to the other woman rather than have its life destroyed. The king had judged correctly; she had proved her case and he delivered her the living babe.

The means employed by artists to make the story in their pictures effective, is well illustrated here in Doré's work. The height of the king standing on the platform, with the bold perpendicular lines of his garments, makes a vigorous contrast with the curving form of the prostrate woman, forcing us to comprehend that she has really thrown herself down with vio-

lent movement.

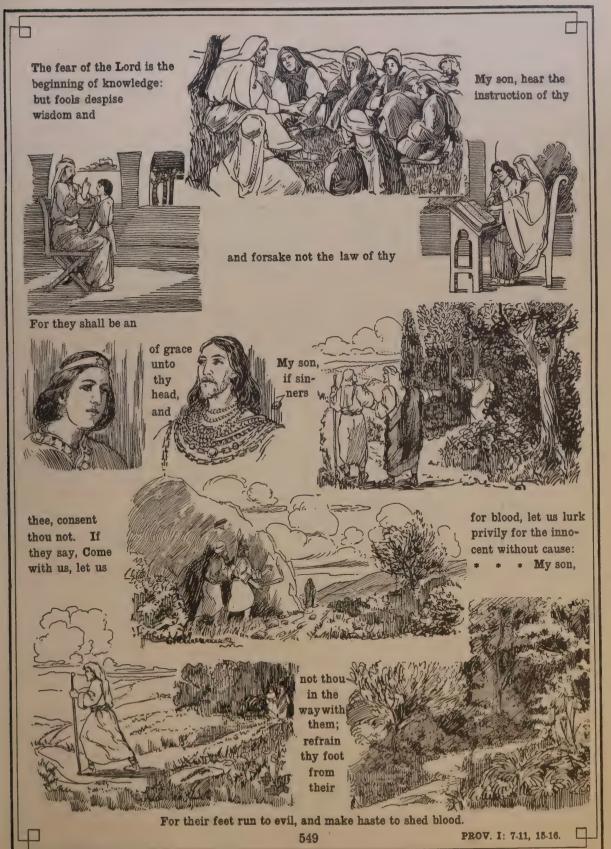
Examining carefully the king's robe it is probable that its ornamentation is correctly historical, but it is the wit of Doré which makes the head dress fall in two perpendicular lines, the sleeves in the same manner, and various ornaments about the neck and breast in the same lines. That is the artist's work. In the prostrate figure, the flying hair and the undulations of the skirt are exactly opposite and therefore effective. In fact, the figure of the false mother has the same effect in the picture. The artist has made her face somewhat dark, her entire figure is a dark one, whereas the real mother is a bright light. These artistic points must be understood or half the force of the story is lost. In talking about contrasts, we have still the upright soldier with his helmet, his breastplate and his sword, which is another element of this same contrasting composition. Also, all these rigid lines make the babe look young and soft and tender, so that we shrink from the thought of cutting his pretty body in two.

-JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON



JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.





THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PROVERBS 1:1-19.

Prayer: Strong Son of God, help me to love righteousness and despise iniquity. Help me to keep my body clean from the drugs and drinks that deaden and the sins that blacken; help me to keep my mind clean from the foul stories, the worse than idle gossip, and all false standards of morality; help me to keep my soul free from green jealousy that poisons, from red anger that inflames, and from black doubts that damn. Help me to love honor more than life, to love wisdom more than words, and to love to save the world more than to save myself. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

"My conscience is my crown; Contented thought my rest; My heart is happy in itself; My bliss is in my breast.

I feel no care of coin; Well doing is my wealth; My mind to me an empire is; While grace affordeth health."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: The first 24 chapters of Proverbs were written by Solomon about 1000 B. C. The first nine chapters are eulogies on true wisdom. His remaining chapters are more strictly proverbs, terse and forceful.

Scripture Setting: Heads With Honor Crowned.
Crown of wisdom, 1 Kings 3:5-14. Crown of
knowledge, Prov. 14:8-18. Crown of praise, 1
Kings, 10:1-10. Crown of righteousness, 2 Tim.
4:1-8. Christ's crown of glory, Heb. 2:1-9.
Life and Conduct Setting: The value of Proverbs

may be gauged from these several valuations: 1

Aristotle, "Remnants, short and correct, saved from the wreck of human philosophy." 2. Agricola, "Short sentences into which the ancients have compressed life." 3. Bacon, "Edged tools of speech which cut the knots of business affairs."
4. Luther, "A book of good works, a handbook of devotion to be compared daily with one's life.''
5. Coleridge, "The best statesman's manual; its
political economy would eradicate extravagance,
debasement and ruin." 6. Gray, "Embraces private morality and the great objects of political importance."

THE PREACHER'S PROVERBS A CROWN OF PEARLS.

Point of Contact. "The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel." We now turn from king David and the Psalms to king Solomon and the Proverbs. Because Solomon chose wisdom rather than great riches or fame it seems that his wisdom was given a golden setting and brought to him far-reaching fame. His influence is thus described by one writer: "Thy soul covered the whole earth, and filled it with dark parables. The countries marveled at thee for thy interpretations and songs and proverbs and parables." (Ecclus. 47:14-17.) Frequently these dark sayings took the form of the Socratic dialogue: Solomon putting difficult questions to the kings and chieftains of neighboring nations, they in turn framing questions for him to answer. He asks in Prov. 6:16, What seven things are an abomination unto the Lord? And Agur in Prov. 30:24 asks, What four things are little but exceeding wise? The historians of Tyre record that this interchange of riddles went on constantly between Hiram and Solomon, each promising to pay a money forfeit for every question of the other he could not answer. Solomon got the better of Hiram until Hiram found a boy of Tyre, the younger son of Abdemon, who not only solved all of Solomon's riddles, but sent that wise man others which he could not answer. Finally a queen from a distant country, mentioned both in the Old Testament and in the New, came in person to put her riddles to him.

gold, precious stones and balsam. But like Hiram, she was worsted in the conflict of wits. She went home profoundly impressed with the magnificence of his court, but more deeply impressed with his remarkable wisdom.

The Purpose of the Book. "To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." In all Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs of which only a portion are preserved in the Book of Proverbs. book is not on a level with the Prophets or the Psalms. It has more of a worldly, prudential look. It is the philosophy of practical life. It lays special emphasis on industry, prudence, intelligence and a good education. This book of practical ethics was largely Solomon's contribution to the growing young men of the kingdom to help them to knowledge and discretion.

The Principles in Interpreting the Book. "To understand a proverb and the interpretation; the words of the wise and their dark sayings." The meaning of a proverb cannot be seized usually at the first reading. "More is meant than meets the eye." Hence they are called "dark sayings." A proverb has the advantage of condensation, a short saying standing for a whole discourse. Every proverb, then, is a brief allegory. Nathan was the friend and teacher of Solomon, and it is likely that he taught him the parable and proverb style. If you compare Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb with Solomon's par-With a long train of camels she brought able of the poor man and the great king

(Eccles. 9:13-16) you will be struck by their strong resemblance.

The parable's condensed statement was afterward developed in its most perfect style by Christ in the stories of the prodigal son and the good shepherd. When He first gave His parable of the sower they understood Him not, but later He gave them His interpretation. His story first aroused their interest and made them inquire. A prophecy declared that Christ should preach in parables and He used many, such as, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Lincoln was a great lover and student of the Bible, and by adopting its language and style became most effective in public guage and style became most effective in passite speech. Like Christ "the common people heard him gladly" because he was the nation's story teller. His greatest speech embodying his slavery views is entitled "A House Divided Against Itself." It is the unfolding and explanation of Christ's proverb. Two principles will help interpret the proverbs. First, remember that the proverbs are only general rules, but may have occasional exceptions. Ex. Prov. 10:27, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days." The days of God-fearing Abel who was murdered is an exception, while Cain the murderer, whose days were prolonged, is another exception. Second, the significance of a proverb is best seen when studied in the light of a particular case in Scripture. Ex. Prov. 1:10, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Read the result of Balaam's yielding in Numbers 22.

The Primary Principle of the Book. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." The approach to Divine things in Proverbs is from a different angle than in any other Scripture. Virtue and vice, holiness and sin, in the Psalms, for example, are represented either as pleasing or displeasing to God. But in Proverbs "goodness" is "wisdom," while "wickedness" is "folly." It holds up vice before the light of reason, prudence and common sense and shows it is full of bitter disappointment and dissatisfaction. It exposes the bad man as not only wicked, but a miserable, contemptible fool. There are many men who are not particularly ashamed of being knaves, but mightily stirred if they are shown to be fools. For all such the book of Proverbs has a powerful ethical and religious appeal. In the practical school of ethics religious reverence is the beginning of knowledge. A tender conscience touched by the spirit of God is the first moving impulse towards honor, rectitude and moral character. He whose mind is influenced by the fear and love of God will learn more in a month than others in a year. Though many of the rules of life in Proverbs seem to be based on mere considerations of prudence, yet religious motives are either implied or distinctly urged.

Proverbial Principles as Pearls in a Crown. "They shall be an ornament of grace to thy head." Solomon here intimates that the

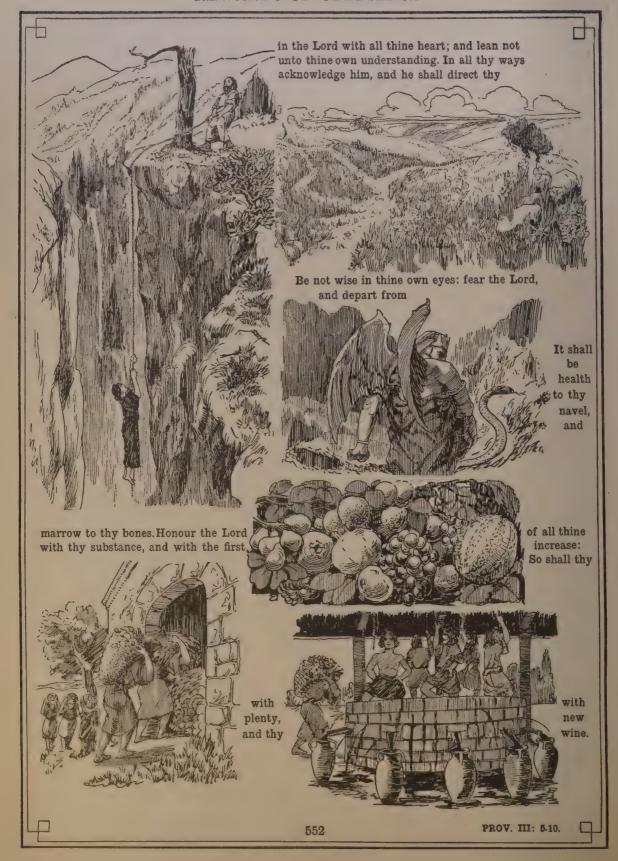
surest way to eminence and distinction in civil matters is to follow true wisdom by obeying parents and reverencing God. A crown of diamonds and pearls on the head and a chain of gold about the neck are the distinguishing ornaments of supreme honor and glory. The pearls of noble principles which we shall wear as a crown to our characters are clustered there from many sources. Some good principles we get from good company. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Some principles we get from "the instruction of a father." Some others from "the law of a mother." A father teaches us how to get our bread honestly, but usually it is a mother who gives us the good advice and the consistent example of godly living.

In the southland before the Civil War a brighteyed boy grew up in a Christian home in the closest confidence of his mother. When only seven years old he brought from school a book which pictured the United States Senate chamber, with the Vice-President of the nation presiding over the body of senators. Looking up into his mother's eyes as he showed her the picture he asked, "Mother, if I am always a good boy, mind what my mother tells me is right, and love God, will I ever get to sit in that great chair?'' The mother paused, then said: "My son, I see no reason, if you are good and brave, why you should not reap the highest honors of your country."

Not very long ago a senator from a southern state was asked to preside over the Senate just as his term was about to expire. He took the occasion to review his public life, how he rose after many struggles to be a general in the Confederate army, and afterward occupied posts of honor in his country's service. But to preside over the Senate was the crowning glory of his life. Then he referred to his boyish question and the answer his mother gave in faith, and every eye was wet. "Gentlemen," said the old general, "that faith my mother had for me has never been forgotten. I have tried to always do what that mother taught me was right, and because of it I sit today in the great chair where more than fifty years ago my mother said I would sit." "My son,

forsake not the law of thy mother.' Quiz and Study. 1. What books of the Old Testament are supposed to have been written by Solomon? 2. What two references are made to Solomon in the New Testament? 3. How many proverbs did Solomon write? 4. Why is Proverbs particularly a book for young men? 5. To what three persons in this lesson does the young man owe obedience?

obedience?
Practical Thoughts. There is a proverb as a remedy for every complaint: 1. For the restless man, "Running up and down the boat brings you no sooner to land." 2. For the careless man, "Measure your cloth ten times, for you can only cut it once." 3. For the impractical man, "Pray to God, but row towards shore." 4. For the man who judges by appearance, "A black cow may give white milk." 5. For the trouble maker, "Speak the truth, but come away quickly."
REV. THOS. B. ROBERTS.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PROVERBS 3:1-10.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I would pray as did king Solomon, "I am but a little child—I know not how to go out or to come in. Give thy servant an understanding heart." In all my ways may I acknowledge Thee; in all my paths do Thou direct me. I would plant the vine of obedience that I may gather the grapes of contentedness. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

"Oh not in strange portentous way
Christ's miracles were wrought of old;
The common thing, the common clay,
He touched and tinctured, and straightway
It grew to glory manifold."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: This chapter is undoubtedly Solomon's, written about 1000 B. C. It shows his favorite arrangement of grouping ten verses in a paragraph (1-10, 11-20). The repetition, "My son," is the language of the tutor instructing his pupil.

Scripture Setting: Fruits of Devotion: Golden fruit, Prov. 8:10-19. Grapes of Eschol, Num. 13:17-27. Sacrifice of obedience, 1 Sam. 15:13-23. The Divine Gardener, Isa. 55:7-13. The garden of

God, Gal. 5:22-26.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage points out the wisdom of the obedient life. 1. There is no moral law but may be followed as a condition to physical health. 2. The highest point of wisdom is to be wise against our own sophistry. 3. The failure: when God looks for good and finds only goods; his epitaph: "Born a man, died a grocer." 4. Let us learn Scripture by heart; let it rule the heart. 5. No two lives can tread the same beaten track. Christ is the Divine Director.

FOUR FRUITS IN THE CHRISTIAN'S CORNUCOPIA.

Point of Contact: "He shall direct." In a London shop window a young florist has placed a strange sign. It reads, "Ugly Corners Made Beautiful." He is an enthusiastic specialist trained in flower culture and orchard surgery. He takes charge of your neglected garden or waste side hill. He piles the loose stones to form a rockery, plants between them stately ferns, scatters seeds of gay and fragrant flowers, straightens the bent fruit trees, cleans their trunks of decay, fills the spaces with cement, sprays the leaves, and makes the ugly corner a nook of beauty.

Isaiah prophesied of another Gardener who would make the solitary place blossom like the rose, and uproot the briars to plant the myrtle tree. This Young Man came to an old olive garden outside Jerusalem's walls and He transformed it into Gethsemane, the rose garden of God. He found near by a horrible hill of execution, called "the place of a skull," and He transformed it into Calvary, the Mount of Redemption. One Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene, finding Him in the garden, "supposed Him to be the gardener." Truly He is the Gardener, making beautiful all the ugly corners of life.

Our present lesson pictures the Christian's prosperity as barns bulging with harvests and presses overflowing with new wine. We may view it as Christ's cornucopia filled with four kinds of fruit.

Longer and Deeper Life. "Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to three." Solomon tells us in Eccles. 2:4, 5 and 6, "I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits: I made me

pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." He planted these trees that he might enjoy their fruits in old age, for as we mentioned in our last lesson God had said, "If thou wilt keep my commandments, as thy father David, I will lengthen thy days." The laws of religion are in strict accord with the laws of hygiene and longevity, for the same God who inspired the Bible gave man his marvellous body. The Christian life is a life of addition. In the promise, "All these things shall be added unto you." is included length of days. The wicked do not half live out their time. Says Solomon, "Neither shall the wicked prolong his days, which are as a shadow." You seldom see an old, gray-headed man in the penitentiary, for sin kills them off before their time. It is a very usual sight to see gray-headed men at church, and to find them active in religious work. "They shall bring forth fruit in old age."

Religion not only prolongs life, but enriches it. David estimated that worship enhanced the value of a day a thousand fold, declaring that one day spent in God's courts was worth a thousand godless days. The worth of a life is not to be measured by the calendar alone, for as one has said, "We live in deeds, not words, in thoughts, not breaths, in feelings, not in figures on a dial. He lives most who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best." Every time we do a noble act we plant a tree that shall yield us the fruit of delight in old age. We need to plant early and late and to live long if we would enjoy the best of life. The picture of content is the old man dwelling in peace under his own vine and fig tree. The choicest

fruit of all is the satisfaction of a life well lived. The peace that God adds to the aged saint is like the blush and bloom He adds to the cheek of the full-ripe peach or the sweet flavor of the mellow pomegranate.

Human and Divine Favor. "So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man." A dear old grandmother had a fond secret. On her mantel was a bottle with a small neck containing a large, beautiful apple. Her keen-minded grandson could not guess her secret till one June he saw a tiny apple growing within a similar bottle. Then grandma's secret was out. A life beautified with human and Divine favor must be early trained under the protection of a Christian home. That Boy of twelve who went back to the Nazareth home and was subject to His parents ripened through eighteen silent years till the time came for Him to show Himself to Israel. All we know is that there was a steady, symmetrical growth. "Jesus increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man."

A pure, strong life enjoys both the favor of God and of good men. When Esther, the queen, stood forth arrayed in her royal garments, the Persian king bade her advance and make known her request, for it would be granted to the half of the kingdom. Such favor was pleasing, indeed, but deep in her heart was the consciousness of the Divine favor, because she had listened to the helpless cry of the Jews and risked her own life to save theirs. If the precepts of God are bound about the neck and written upon the heart the life which results will be pleasing to all good men, and what the best men favor God approves.

Public and Private Guidance. "He shall direct thy paths." A party of young people left a Pennsylvania city to spend the day on the Pocono mountains in late autumn. Only two had been there before, a husband and wife, but the company felt secure under their leadership. They delayed the return too long and were unable to establish directions or to find the return path. After a half hour of bewilderment they were thoroughly alarmed and some of the young ladies became hysterical. It was the time for little Ehrmin, the three-year-old boy, to speak, "Father, why don't you ask Jesus to show you the path?" They all knelt on the frown-ing mountain in the gathering darkness while in simple faith the child offered his simple prayer. Very soon one of the party stumbled upon the lost path. They reached the station at last. The mother has cherished in her heart that first impromptu prayer of her boy. The acknowledgment of Christ in God will solve for all of us life's riddles, and Jesus will show us the path.

All the conspicuous failures in history are men who tried to choose their own path. The successful characters, like Solomon, prayed for a discerning spirit. I venture to suggest that the forbidden apples eaten by Adam and Eve were the fruit

self-sufficiency and conceit. God afterwards directed their paths, but He directed them both out of the garden of paradise. To the young man who takes this verse as his life text and abandons himself to the mind of God I can conceive of no permanent possession, no lasting satisfaction that shall not be his.

Temporal and Spiritual Prosperity. "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.' It is well to remember that the great temporal prosperity of Solomon's reign flowed down a golden stream as the fulfillment of a Divine promise. On the summit of Mount Gibeon, with a vast concourse of dignitaries, the young king offered his royal sacrifices. A thousand victims were consumed. He makes his choice, so well-pleasing to God, "Give Thy servant an understanding heart."

That Solomon honored the Lord with his substance is seen by the great work he did as founder of the temple, bringing his royal gifts with a lavish hand. Nothing could be too good to dedicate to religious offices. The great vessels of brass cast by Hiram in the clay pits of the Jordan valley were so numerous that Solomon, with imperial magnificence, would not weigh them—"their weight was never found out." The first-fruits and the lambs without blemish belonged to the temple and religion. And as a result of putting God first we read that "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his own vine and under his own fig-tree." Here is the great lesson of Christian stewardship beginning to take form. Except we be obedient to God in the realm of the temporal and seen, how shall we learn to be obedient in the realm of the spiritual and unseen? The writer knows a plain old farmer living on the hills who for a good many years has practiced tithing, and has sent annually five hundred dollars for foreign missions. His peach crops never fail, and best of all his soul is steadily ripening in the favor and sunshine of Divine love.

Quiz and Study. 1. Who was the first to offer fruits as sacrifice? Who was the first tither? What king was told that obedience was better than sacrifice? 2. What seven blessings are named in this lesson as the fruit of obedience? 3. What was Solomon's choice; his great monument; his chief sin; his contribution to the Scriptures? 4. What qualities of mind and heart are the fruits of a Christian life?

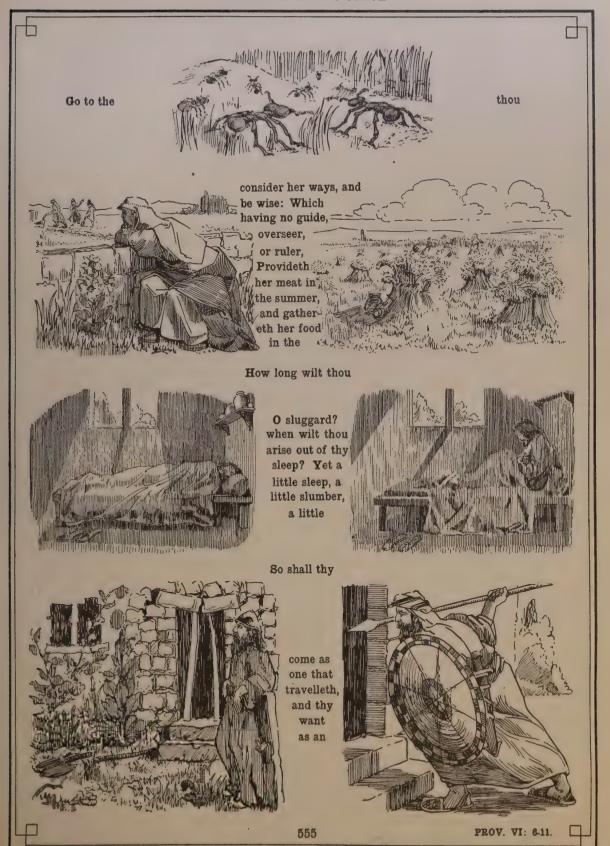
Christian life?

Challenge Text. "In all thy — acknowledge —, and He shall — thy —." Prov. 3: (?)

Practical Thoughts. 1. This lesson only samples the fruits in God's garden, only a cluster the messenger brings from the vineyards of Eschol. 2. The greater the growth from Divine rectitude towards human understanding the greater the danger to life. 3. The Garden of Eden describes the serpent of sin, human disobedience, the Divine curse, the flaming sword. 4. The City of God decurse, the flaming sword. 4. The City of God describes the tree of life, the serpent east out, the curse removed, the dazzling crown. 5. Solomon gave us wise precepts, but a greater than Solomon

REV. THOS. B. ROBERTS.

HONEST INDUSTRY



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PROVERBS 6:6-11.

Prayer: Teach my heart to pray, O Christ, and teach my hands to work. Let each day's task honestly performed be as a daily prayer that rises to Thee. May my life be steadler and my labor better because I remember Thee at the Nazareth work-bench. May my noblest thoughts find constant expression in doing good. May I love Thee more by serving my fellow-men more. May I never eat idle bread. Give me work, and keep me busy till the great whistle blows for quitting, then send me Home with eternal reward. me Home with eternal reward. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN

Historical Setting: In this chapter, written about 1000 B. C., king Solomon reveals his fondness for observing nature, his own delight in study and labor, and his oft-stated conviction of a con-nection between laziness and immorality.

Scripture Setting: Observations on Industry. Creation's many teachers, Prov. 30:24-31. The field of the slothful, Prov. 24:30-34. Labor and bread, 2 Thess. 3:6-16. Idleness and hunger, Prov. 19:14-24. Pattern of good works, Titus 2:6-14.

THE TWO WORKMEN.

Point of Contact. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Does it not appear strange to see king Solomon down on his knees over an anthill studying entomology? How much better that was than taking a nap on the grass, for by studying he gained royal wisdom. His interest in ants was only to make better men in his kingdom. With a little ant he shames a big lazy man. In our present lesson he pictures two workmen, one industrious, the other lazy, or two ways, one leading up to fool's hill, the other leading to the summit of success. We see these two ways best when we see these two kind of men working in the same field, and possibly for a few days doing the same kind of work and getting the same pay. Verses 6, 7, and 8 picture the worker; verses 9, 10, and 11 the shirker.

"Let us be content in work To do the thing we can, and not presume To fret because it's little." -Mrs. Browning.

An Independent and Intelligent Worker. "Having no overseer, or ruler." Solomon's patience, no doubt, was often tried by the irresponsibility of Palestinian workmen in his building enterprises. A recent excavator says, "In employing workmen in this country (Syria) nothing annoyed me more than the necessity to hire an overseer. The workmen will not work at all unless kept to it. The overseer himself is a perfect specimen of laziness." Solomon's lesson here is that every ant is a responsible working unit. Each individual gathers its food, cares for its young, bears its burden to build the I we sow not in springtime and gather not

"Two workers in one field Toiled on from day to day; Both had the same hard labor, Both had the same small pay. One worked with many a groan, One whistled all the day."

ITS RELATIONS. Life and Conduct Setting: This passage contrasts the worker and the shirker. 1. Labor is desirable for its own sake apart from its substantial results. 2. The hour of idleness is the hour of temptation. 3. There are four legs to the good workman's table: industry, knowledge, prudence, perseverance. 4. Idleness is the dead sea where virtue is drowned, the self-made sepulcher of living man. 5. No man can truly say, "I do not need to work."

mound, and in all its tireless labor is its own director. The work of life in all respects is an individual one. The idea that great lead-

ers can stamp down upon the masses religion and civilization is a wrong one. Said a university president to the graduating class before him, "Would you abolish poverty and advance civilization? Then educate individuals one by one to be more virtuous, more intelligent, more skillful, more industrious." The real worker waits

not to be told or driven; he sees what is to be done, finds out how to do it, goes ahead and completes it. The donkey, the emblem of industrial stupidity, does not escape the work by loafing, but only gets the whacks additional. The young man who would rather see his own hands move than to watch the hands on the clock will not always be a hired hand. Watch him, for he is traveling towards the summit of success as steadily as the little ant

climbs to the top of the anthill.

A Pattern of Foresightedness and Frugality. "Provideth her meat in the summer." This is the homely philosophy of "making hay while the sun shines." Solomon states it as a rule for practical life in these words. "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the sun." There are three seasons for the ant to labor, spring, summer, and autumn, and she improves them all. She does not store for winter, like the squirrel, for in winter, when she cannot work, she wisely sleeps. when the food is plentiful she stores it. There are three seasons to life, the study and preparation of youth, the serious pursuits of middle life, and the reflections, adjustments, and preparations that belong to old age. In death "the night cometh when no man can work." The man who kills time is killing the germ from which springs eternity. If

in the summer, cheerless will be the outlook when autumn comes. The lessons we learn today, and the information and training we can acquire, we will need tomorrow, be sure of that.

A young man is called before the directors of a great corporation. The men around that table represent great fortunes and every one of them is old enough to be his father. But the young man has the floor, and the older men are intently listening. They listen because he knows. The day of your opportunity will as surely come. The question is, Will you be ready to meet it? It is a mistake to think we can make up lessons missed, days wasted, tasks ignored. For every day has its one lesson, its one task.

"Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes.
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees its close."

The Nature of the Sluggard's Sleep. "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?" I venture to say he will stumble on, walking in his sleep, and never get awake till he meets with a Divine awakening. We have considered the ant that works: now let us consider the hook-worm which is supposed to be responsible for laziness and shiftlessness. We have here a graphic description of the sluggard, an ironical imitation of his own lazy language as he yawns and stretches over his work, "Let me put off the job a bit, let me rest a little, let me fold my arms and take a snooze." He never quite gets to sleep, and sadder still he never quite wakes up. He is so slow about starting every job that he never quite gets through it. He is like the camel who lies down at night under his burden, bearing it in his sleep. Do not think he has no burdens. It is the work and worry of his life to escape labor, but the world is always finding a job to suit his gait.

A boy that was painfully slow and lazy was apprenticed to a naturalist. It took him two hours to throw seed to the canaries. "What will I do now?" he asked. The naturalist studied his collection as he reflected on the boy's speed, and finally said, "I think you may take the tortoise out for a run." A place is made in the world for the lazy and the sluggish boy. He must work even if he goes to the reformatory, but he becomes a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water.

The Slow Coming of Poverty. "So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth." It is slowly, step by step, that the traveller approaches, but the sluggard however much warned is never ready for the emergency. He never begins a bank account, so there is nothing when the rainy day comes. He had no money to waste on life-insurance, so he dies to leave his children the wards of charity. He had a fair capital with which to

start, but he has allowed it to dwindle away.

Solomon pictures each man's inheritance as an arable field and an enclosed garden. The slothful man instead of working it merely works at it. He simply puts in his time there. His neglect is soon manifest. Gradually it deteriorates. Little by little the thorns and the brambles appear; picket by picket the fence falls down; slowly but surely the weeds gain in the garden and choke out the good seed; the vines unpruned grow to wood and produce no clusters: breaks appear in the stone wall and the cattle roam at will. Poverty has at last reached his house, if it has been long in coming. His farm, run down and impoverished, no longer produces a revenue.

"Oh poverty is a wretched thing;
"Tis full of grief and pain.

It makes the heart of the little child
With weary sighs complain."

The Rapid Approach of Want. "Thy want shall come as an armed man." The slothful owner has failed to improve his chance and so loses it. He has been sleeping too many years. Now comes the rude awakening. His family is with him in bed. A horseman comes riding up and knocks at his door. It is a constable armed with a writ of ejection. He has always held that there was time enough, but now there is no time. He and his family must hurriedly dress and move out into the night. Others suffer and are shamed by one man's neglect.

There is some honest poverty, but much poverty is dishonorable and hardly short of criminal, the frayed out badge of worthlessness and wantonness. Such families are frequently startled by some critical hour of want and suffering. But the hour of their emergency is the natural and inevitable culmination of many unobserved and wasted hours preceding.

Quiz and Study. 1. What two characters and two results are here contrasted? 2. What other little workers beside ants does Solomon commend? 3. How do the Scriptures represent the man who provides not for his own household? 4. Who is the first person mentioned in Scripture? The first work mentioned? 5. What trade did Jesus learn? What reference did He make to His work and His Father's? What is the greatest work of life?

Challenge Text: "My - worketh -, and I--. John 5: (?)

Practical Thoughts. 1. The rust of inaction destroys sooner than the wear and friction of industry. 2. Love, labor, and religion make a happy family. 3. Idleness, vice, and poverty are familiar bed-fellows. 4. No penal institution is a true reformatory where men spend the working hours in idleness. 5. A genius for hard work is the best native genius of all. 6. Idleness is one of the seven deadly sins, the devil's softest cushion.

REV. THOS. B. ROBERTS.

THE EXCELLENT WOMAN

Who can find a virtuous



for her price is far above rubies.
The heart of her



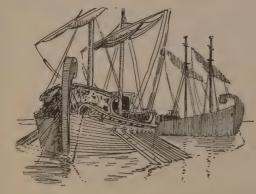
doth safely
trust in her,
so that he
shall have no
need of spoil.
She will do
him good and
not evil all the
days of her life.
She seeketh



and



and
worketh
willingly
with her
hands.
She is
like the
merchants'



she bringeth her food from afar. She



also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her



and a portion to her



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PROV. XXXI: 10-15.

THE EXCELLENT WOMAN

She considereth a



and
buyeth it:
with the
fruit of
her hands
she
planteth a



She



her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her



goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the



and her hands hold the



She stretcheth out her hand



yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the



for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

PROV. XXXI: 16-21.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PROVERBS 31:10-31.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, We thank Thee for the example we have of Thy loving labor for the sisters in the Nazareth home, and Thy loving thought and care even upon the cross for the mother Mary. We thank Thee for Thy teachings which have so exalted woman. Wilt Thou guard our homes from every evil, and keep from our hearts every unholy thought. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

"A dream of noble woman,
Diviner, but still human;
Solving the riddle old,
Shaping the Age of Gold."

-Whittier.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: This Eastern poem is the ideal picture of a fine woman which an honored and wise mother gave to her son, Lemuel, a Chaldee chief. This woman, whose picture she doubtless draws unconsciously from herself and her own practical character, is such as he may fitly seek for his wife and queen.

Scriptural Setting: The Uncrowned Queen. King's daughters. Psa. 45:8-17. Kindness of Shunemite woman, 2 Kings 4:8-17. Vashti's noble refusal. Esther 1:10-19. Her people's saviour,

Esther 4:7-17. Good works of Dorcas, Acts 9:36-43.

Sphere of the wife, Eph. 5:22-33.

Life and Conduct Setting: The lesson is a noble description of a queen in the realm of character.

1. The true standard of a nation is the moral condition of its women. 2. A good name and a noble spirit are womanly charms that never fade. 3. A woman's power for evil is seen in Jezebel; a woman's power for good is seen in Mary. 4. Christ lifted from woman the veil of ignorance, bondage and obscurity. 5. A woman's home is her throng, children her jewels, virtue her armed body guard.

A QUARTET OF QUEENLY QUALITIES.

Point of Contact. "Who can find a virtuous woman?" Our lesson is a carefully wrought acrostic poem, each of the twentytwo verses beginning with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This first verse begins with aleph and the last one begins with tau. The unknown mother who wrote it chose this form that she might easily teach it to her son and that it might be easily remembered. This son was a prince or a child who would inherit some unusual power. His mother, so anxious that he should form a happy and honorable marriage relation, may have composed this very soon after she had taught him his alphabet. Thus forewarned and forearmed he grew to young manhood. It must have exercised great influence on him in choosing his young lady friends to have early memorized these lines by his mother. She must have been a woman of strong sense and noble virtues herself to have drawn so fine and lifelike a portrait of the kind of woman she hoped her son would marry. Since the young prince was to choose a life companion and not a holiday partner, she greatly desired he might fall in love with a virtuous girl.

A Is for Affection: a True Wife. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Sooner than the young can imagine, the romance of courtship ripens into the more serious business of homemaking. A pure, deep affection is the very alpha or beginning of a happy and permanent marriage. Many a pretty girl is like the flower called the imperial crown, which is greatly admired for its showy appearance and unusual form, but has a very displeasing fra-

grance. But the imperial crown on the brow of the bride that is truly beautiful is affectionate faithfulness. The ideal bride is not the one who withers at the touch of fever or misfortune, like the flower, but lasts and endures on a bed of sickness, in old age, even unto death. "She doeth him good all the days of her life." The poem represents such a wife as a true helpmeet to her husband. "He shall have no lack of gain." She takes such wise care of his earnings that he reaps prosperity and she furnishes such inspirations and incentives that he achieves honor. "Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land."

A Puritan minister has left a very quaint sermon on "A True Wife" from a text in Prov. 18:22, "He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord." How much like Solomon's are these proverbs: "A good wife should be like three things which three things she should not be like. She should be like a snail to keep within her house; but she should not be like a snail to keep all she has upon her back. She should be like an echo to answer when she is called; but she should not be like an echo always to have the last word. She should be like a town clock, always keeping time with regularity; but she should not be like the town clock, speaking so loud as to be heard all over the town." How beautiful was that tribute Pliny paid his wife, "She loved that which was immortal in me." By her silent influence she ruled the life of Pliny, and through Pliny ruled the Roman state.

B Is for Business: a Good Homekeeper. "She looketh well to the ways of her household." This ideal woman was very domestic and economical. "She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands." Horace Bushnell used to say that in the age of homespun, women were given by the Al-

mighty to help their husbands get a living. but that now they only help to spend one. Frugal industry is here represented as being nourished by the wife. The ancient women used to dye a royal purple in their homes, but the secret process has become a lost art. So I fear has it happened to the careful prudence and thrift that belonged to the wife of the age of homespun. The careful watching of the corners, the little economies of wisdom are not marks of meanness: they represent rather a husband and wife striving together in consolidated love to make sure a reward and competency in old age. Instead of the bread of idleness this efficient business manager of the household provides an ample loaf; instead of skimped clothing against the winter's cold, she provides scarlet wool for all her household. She has enough of all things always for her family, but never enough to waste. There are mothers who in their battles with necessity always win out each year a little advantage and advance of thrift, yet keep their fami-lies within the bounds of comfort. This wise economy may be a homely virtue treated by the careless with humor or scorn, but it has been a great schooling for future success. The book of Proverbs treats with scorn the incapable housekeeper. "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

C Is for Child Culture: a Faithful Mother. "Her children rise up and call her blessed." This ideal woman is a moral manager as well as an ideal household manager. Her conduct toward her children, like that toward her clothing and her food, is beyond reproach. It is her constant care that her children shall keep good company and contract good habits. She is the embodiment of the apostolic ideal, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

Perhaps modern times have known no nobler type of faithful motherhood than that of Susannah Wesley presiding over the rectory at Epworth, Lincolnshire. Everything was so systematized in her large family that there was time for every duty whether it was instructing the younger boys in religious matters or writing a motherly letter to her "Jack," a college lad at Oxford. She has no ornate monument, but in Westminster Abbey are the tombs of her illustrious sons John and Charles, and the hand of Susannah Wesley now rings ten thousand church bells throughout the land. Of her, Adam Clark, the great commentator, writing on this very Scripture, says, "I have met at least the equal of this Jewish matron. Her Christianity gave to her virtues and excellences a heightening, which the Jewish matron could not

D Is for Devotion: a Good Christian. "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be

praised." It is undoubtedly true that the noblest type of a religious woman ever produced in America was the Puritan woman. This thirty-first chapter of Proverbs and the Apocalypse were the sources of her ideals. She stood for strong convictions on Scripture truth; she had an intense sense of the authority of righteousness; she had a clearvoiced conscience of the purest type; she had a profound sense of the Divine overrule; she represented a womanhood Christinspired to the fingertips. In the Apocalypse she found two striking symbols of womanthe one type powerful for good, the other powerful for evil. There is the woman upon the scarlet colored beast full of the names of blasphemy-the woman seducer; and there is the woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars-the leader of good, the mother of light. The ideal woman of John's vision he calls the bride of Christ. It is better to be the bride of Christ than to be one of the 400. We need such a woman today to rule America from the throne room of the home; such a woman can make the watchwords of the twentieth century. This description of a woman now living recently appeared: "She is a woman of winning personality, broad culture, exceptional executive ability, great proficiency as a household economist, of high social standing, inspiring in her pupils' love and reverence." So that God hath not left the world without witnesses of queenly qualities today.

Quiz and Study. 1. What girl watched over her unt and study. 1. What girl watched over her infant brother and afterwards became one of the leaders of her people? 2. What young woman, great-grandmother of David, found her husband in the harvest field? 3. What two statements in the lesson suggest womanly industry? What two womanly kindnesses? 4. What does she do for her husband, her children, her maids, the poor? 5. What woman wished Christ to be released from Pilate? What women were last at the cross? What women were first at the tomb?

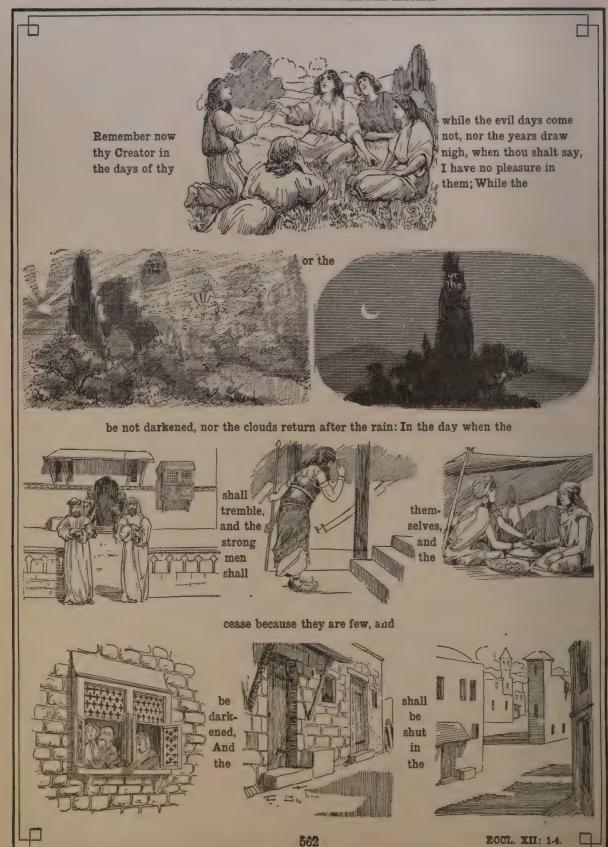
Challenge Text. "A virtuous — is a — to her

..." Prov. 12: (?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Religion adorns the mind and heart. The King's daughters are all glorious within. Some wives are like a goodly merchant ship, some are like a deadly man-of-war. 3. A devoted wife is too busy for mischief, too noble for jealousy, too virtuous for scandal. 4. Four secular virtues mark the good housewife, early rising, cleanliness, industry, and economy. 5. Four reasons why the good wife may laugh at coming days: her stores and supplies prepared, confidence in her husband's regard, hope in her growing children, a heart committed to the Lord. 6. My lady beautiful is my lady bountiful: a sympathizing heart for the sorrowing, discriminating eyes to know the deserving, hands beautiful with benevolence.

REV. THOMAS B. ROBERTS.

THE CREATOR REMEMBERED



THE CREATOR REMEMBERED



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ECCLESIASTES 12.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou art the maker of the worlds. Thou hast also created us for Thy glory. When sin and Satan had wrought ruin in the soul temple Thou didst come again to repair it; and thou didst give even Thyself, to insure a true foundation and a holy life and character. Help us by Thy grace to build the best not only for time but for eternity. For Christ's sake, Amen.

Souls are built as temples are-Based on truth's eternal law Sure and steadfast, without flaw, Through the sunshine, through the snown, Up and on the building goes; Every fair thing finds its place, Every hard thing lends a grace, Every hand may make or mar. -Susan Coolidge.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 980. Flace, Jerusalem. Ferson, Solomon telling of life's greatest duties.

Scripture Setting: Building the Life Temple. Beginning of wisdom, Prov. 9:1-12. Contrasted builders, Psa. 1. The one thing needful, Phil. 3:1-11. A working faith, Jas. 1:19-27. Redeeming the time, Eph. 5:15-21. Busy to the end, 2 Pet. 1:12-21. A building from God, 2 Cor. 5:1-10. Take heed how you build, 1 Cor. 3:9-23.

Life and Conduct Setting: Here is a list of convincing reasons why we should remember God; and we should remember that we can do this fully, only as we accept and love the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember God, because He made us, and made us

for His glory. 2. Because of the coming days of weakness and old age, when we shall specially need God. 3. Because the opportunity may not be continued to us, and death may suddenly end all. 4. Because we can get the best even out of this life only by having God in us and with us. 5. Because in no other way can we attain to true wisdom and blessedness. 6. Because abundant means and calls are present to direct us in the right way. cause we shall be brought into judgment for the way we choose and live. All these reasons urge the duty with special emphasis upon the young.

"Youth is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward."

A WORD PICTURE OF LIFE.

A Message to Youth. Not all pictures are painted with a brush on canvas. He who knows how to use words can handle them with as magic an effect as the painter does his colors. We call such a word-picture an allegory, and nowhere do we find such a beautiful and complete allegory of life as this given by the ancient Preacher.

The opening words of the Preacher's warning are stately and solemn. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The very first word of warning is the word which begins the fourth commandment. Admirable as it is to obey father and mother, the Preacher lays a higher command upon the young. He would have them remember their Creator; accept Him as Saviour; obey Him as Lord and King. He would have them use their youthful strength to His honor and glory; exalt Him with eager young brain and let untiring hands and feet perform His Rendering reverence and obedierrands. ence to the Creator of all makes youth worth

How wise the Preacher who so long ago declared that the best years are the years of youth, thus anticipating by two thousand years the recent scientific investigations which prove that the maximum of physical strength is attained between the age of seventeen and twenty-three, so that office, factory and workshop demand young men

and women; and some of the great railroad companies even refuse to take a new man in their service who is over twenty-three years of age. Should a young man withhold the best period of his life from God and offer his Creator only the years of waning power and strength?

One of the most pathetic scenes in a great man's life was when after his retirement from the highest office in the land, Andrew Jackson made a public confession of Christ and joined the church in his old age. After he had taken the sacred vows, he stood before the altar and with trembling voice and tearful eyes, publicly voiced his regret that, though an old man in years, he was but a babe in Christ. Then he warned the young men to remember their Creator in the day of their youth, instead of wasting the best years of life in seeking earthly honor, and bringing to God the years of infirmity and weakness.

A Picture Parable of Life. Under the figure of a decaying, storm-swept house, youth is introduced to old age, and because it portrays a godless old age, the picture is dark and dreary. Just as some paintings are symbolical and need interpretation, so we shall understand this word-picture better, when we learn that "sun and light" stand for prosperity and blessing; "darkness" for calamity and distress. The "clouds returning," suggest the oft-recurring trials of life. The "keepers of the house" are the hands and arms which are as so many guards to the body-palace of which the head is as the watch tower. The "strong men" are the feet and legs-the supporting pillars of the body-building. The "grinders" are the teeth; those that "look

out of the windows" are the eyes; the "doors" are the two lips, while the "daughters of music" are the vocal cords broken and unstrung. The "keepers of the house" become the palsied arm and trembling hand of old age, and the strong men of the body bend under the weight of years. The "grinders"—ah! they will one day cease because they are few; and those windows of the soul—the bright eyes of youth—will give place to the darkened vision of old age.

The Picture Grows. As the strong body of youth passes with swift decadence into the feeble, tottering tenement of old age, a transformation is seen in the master of the house. Instead of the undisturbed slumber of youth, he rises early—"at the voice of the bird." Confidence and daring are succeeded by extreme caution. Great enterprises and exciting adventures no longer appeal to him; he is "afraid of that which is high," even avoiding hills and stairs. Courage has fled; "fears shall be in the way" of the mind not stayed on the Creator.

"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness," but the Preacher uses the figure of the "almond tree" blooming before other trees, to indicate the whitening locks of one whom sin has made prematurely old. One who has spent all his forces in evil pursuits so that even so light a thing as a "grasshopper shall be a burden"—cannot serve his Creator with energy and enthusiasm. Indeed he does not long to do so, since "desire shall fail" and the soul no more longs for God. The mourning over his departure will be as heartless as that of hired mourners. Such is the old age of the godless. Who would choose a life whose end promises so little?

Other Pictures. Is the word picture repulsive? The Preacher draws two more He invokes sudden death in life's prime, using the figure of the ancient lamp, which consisted of a golden bowl or receptacle for oil, suspended from the roof of the house or tent by a silver cord. The whitish spinal cord, ofttimes called the "thread of life" is the silver cord, and the "golden bowl," a simile for the skull, which contains the brain. How often the cord of life is snapped; or something gives way in the brain, and soul and body are separated as suddenly as "ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken." Again the picture is of a deep well or cistern where the water is drawn by means of a windlass to which is attached a rope and bucket—a

good image of the movements of the heart and organs of respiration. The bucket or pitcher is dashed to pieces, the wheel is broken and no water can be drawn. So the most active and useful life must end when heart or lungs cease to perform their function. How insecure a thing is life! Who can afford to wait some future time in which to remember God?

A Question Answered by the Questioner. There was a time when the Preacher himself had asked, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Were man and beast alike and did death end all? Now he answers his own question. "Dust shall return to dust," but—and the words ring down through the centuries with bugle blast—"The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The soul never dies. It is the living spirit of man, breathed into him by his Creator; released from its earthly habitation by death it returns to the great Giver of life.

When in his eighties, John Quincy Adams was accosted by a friend. "Well, how is Mr. Adams?" The statesman replied, "John Quincy Adams is very well, sir, but the house he is living in is fast decaying. The underpinning is shaky, the windows are clouded, and the roof not so strong as it once was, and, the fact is, John Quincy Adams is preparing to move into a new habitation."

Weighed in the Balance. The Preacher was a man who had touched life at every point. He was the wisest man of all ages. He knew both men and books, and out of his vast experience he had learned the emptiness of a life lived without God. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity." The dying Alexander, longing for more worlds to conquer; the slain Cæsar with "none so poor as to do him honor"; the caged Napoleon on the lonely little Island of St. Helena; the pleasure seeking Leopold, dying in slow torture; the richest man in the world unable to eat a working man's dinner-all attest the truth of the Preacher's verdict. The attainment of one's heart's desire is powerless to grant satisfaction to the one who strives only for earthly good. Nothing in the world is lasting. Youth soon gives place to old age. The pleasures of earth dull; its riches have wings; its honors fade; its friendships do not last. Its rewards are uncertain. Death is the only certainty. The one who serves the world may soon lose all his gain.

The great and ambitious Cardinal Wolsey who forgot his Creator in the effort to win the patronage of King Henry VIII was sentenced to death by the

fickle king he had served. He may have thought of these words of the Preacher as he sadly declared, "Had I served my God half as well as I have served my king, I would have met with a different reward."

Book Learning Versus True Wisdom. Though printing was not invented until the middle of the fifteenth century of the Christian era, we must not imagine that the people of ancient times were without a literature. Written documents are as old as civilization itself, and there are hierogylphics or sign writings now extant which were made more than two thousand years before Christ. Though these ancient rolls or volumes bore little resemblance to our modern books and contained much less matter, they were often catalogued and collected in some place for the general use of the public. There were collections of books in the temples; in the royal palaces and even in the tombs of kings, so that the Preacher declared that "Of making many books there is no end." All dealt with religion or history.

The preacher was a learned man and conversant with this literature and his warning to those who, in the conceit of their own intellect, would solve the problems of life by a study of these man-made writings, might well be handed down to the present day when so many groundless assaults are made upon religion. Books without end have been written to disprove the word of God, until their "study is a weariness of the flesh," while the Bible is still the Book whose "words of truth" warn the living, and comfort the dying, and lead us to the one Shep-

The Test of Life. The Preacher has painted an unpleasant picture. He has drawn a dark and gloomy cavern where danger ever lurks and disappointment broods. Such is life without the loving care and guidance of God. Youth will never reach the goal of happiness which he has set out to attain if he enters upon that path of impiety, skepticism, and neglect of God's laws and ordinances. The Preacher has set a danger sign before the road that leads to ungodliness, and now he points to the road of true happiness and success. How different the picture! It is in the open. God's sky is overhead, the stars sing His praise, while one sees the glorious dawn of another day. God is very near. Life is a daily walk with the Creator of all good. Present happiness points to greater future joy, and old age is no longer dark and dreary. It is the glorious sunset of life, as of Moses, with natural strength unabated, or the psalmist who was able to "Walk through the valley of the shadow of death," without fear, comforted and strengthened by the God whose goodness and mercy had never failed.

The great truth which shall guide each one who obeys it to the happiness which youth desires to reach is summed up in the Preacher's final exhortation, "Fear God and keep His commandments." God knows each individual soul. Not only has He lifted man above the beast, but he distinguishes between good men and bad, and holds each personally accountable for his actions. Men judge by reputation, but God's test is character. "For God shall bring every work into judgment and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." No act of life is beneath the notice of the great Judge, no motive of life so hidden as to be unseen by Him. Truly we should remember our Creator in youth, since to our Creator we shall have to give an account of our thoughts, words and deeds, and from His just sentence there can be no appeal.

Quiz and Study. 1. Who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes? 2. What other books did he write? 3. How do we best show that we remember God? 4. Which one of the ten commandments begins with the word "Remember?"

Challenge Text. "I love them that — me, and those that seek me — shall — me." Prov. 8:—(?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. The whole life is needed in order to serve God fully. 2. If we do not begin to love God in youth, we have no reason to believe that we shall begin at all. 3. Youth is made for pleasures and joys, but they should not be allowed to keep one from the true joy of life. 5. Youth is the time for choices, and certainly the best things should not be neglected nor forgotten. 6. There comes a time when the power of choice is gone. MARGARET WINTRINGER.



FOURTH DIVISION THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS

JOHN SINGER SARGENT. 1856.

Perhaps foremost among American artists who have found recognition and fame abroad is John Singer Sargent. The son of a Boston physician, born in Florence, Italy, he grew to school age amid surroundings that for hundreds of years have been an inspiration and a standard of achievement to generations unnumbered, of architects, sculptors and painters. Hand in hand with his father, as did Raphael di Sanzio, he roamed through the storied galleries of the great palaces of Florence, lingering by the waterside in the Val d' Arno, listening perchance to the story of Dante and Beatrice, of Laura and Petrarch, while leaning upon a balustrade by the water gate, or upon a bridge parapet that in its time had supported the leaning arms of these great ones. Thus the lad imbibed from his earliest years, a sense of the wonder, the romance and achievement of the great past that of itself was enough to make possible a great career. Copying portraits by great Italian masters, lingering with sketch book and pencil beneath Giottos' campanile, in study of the city's matchless architecture, Sargent acquired as a lad a taste for refined and beautiful surroundings. and a standard of work given to few to acquire so early in life.

In 1874 he was taken by his father to Paris, and on the recommendation of a friend, father and son went to the studio of Carolus Duran—the great Carolus—in the Boulevarde du Mont Parnasse. The busy master, amid a studio full of industrious students, yet found time to be polite to these Americans who were so different to most he had seen. Dr. Sargent opened a portfolio he had brought with him, and silently handed one of his son's drawings to the master. It was enough. Duran recognized here

a talent worth training. And Sargent forthwith took his place as a student. In spite of a great original talent, he took frankly and humbly his place as a scholar. Obedient and docile as a child, he was chosen by the master to accompany him when Duran went to the south of Europe to collect material for the decoration of the ceiling of the Luxembourg. In 1878, after four years of humble. self-effacing study, he sent to the Salon his first exhibited picture "en Route pour la Peche." In 1879 he exhibited a portrait of his master, one of the best ever painted of the great Carolus Duran, and on this, while yet in his studentship, he became famous. Passionately fond of music, he was often to be seen at the Chatelet d'or, on the Cirque d'Hiver concerts, observing each picturesque detail in the scene before him. In 1883 he went to London, where he has since lived. In 1887 he came to New York and Boston, during which period he became famous most as a portrait painter. On his second visit in 1896, he received the commission for the execution of the famous series of decorative paintings in the Boston Public Library and the Congressional Library, Washington. During the execution of the former, he shared the studio of another famous American painter, Sir Edwin Austin Abbey, at Fairford in Gloucestershire, England.

His most famous portrait probably is one of children; "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose" now the property of the British Government and in the Tate Gallery, London. The famous Frieze of the Prophets in the Boston Public Library is, in the public eye, his principal work, while among his portraits, those of Carolus Duran and Ellen Terry are no less famous.

JAMES BEALINGS.



PROPHETS

BY JOHN SINGER SARGENT

In the Public Library of Boston, Massachusetts, there are extensive wall paintings by a number of noted artists, among them Sargent, a wonderful painter whose work will be honored throughout coming centuries. In future generations people will make pilgrimages from all parts of the world to visit this place to view these famous paintings.

In one of the spacious corridors of this building this artist designed a series of elaborate paintings, illustrating the history of religions. Across the end of this room runs a frieze, made up of life-sized figures of Prophets standing shoulder to shoulder. These have noble faces and are heavily draped, which gives serious dignity to the arrangement. Although these draperies give these men an oriental air, they are really fine specimens of the Anglo-Saxon race, very little idealized. Sargent is much of a realist, painting what he sees, but maintaining extraordinarily fine style. There has been much dispute as to what he aimed at in selecting the gestures and movements of these prophets, so that I know of no writing which explains this, but they are very distinguished men, and that is much. They evidently are earnestly maintaining their various callings by speech and attitude.

Of this frieze our artist shows but five prophets: Micah, Haggai, Malachi. Zechariah and Hosea. We are allowed to read into such an allegory whatever meaning we like, till such time as the artist may explain to us its meaning.

-JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON

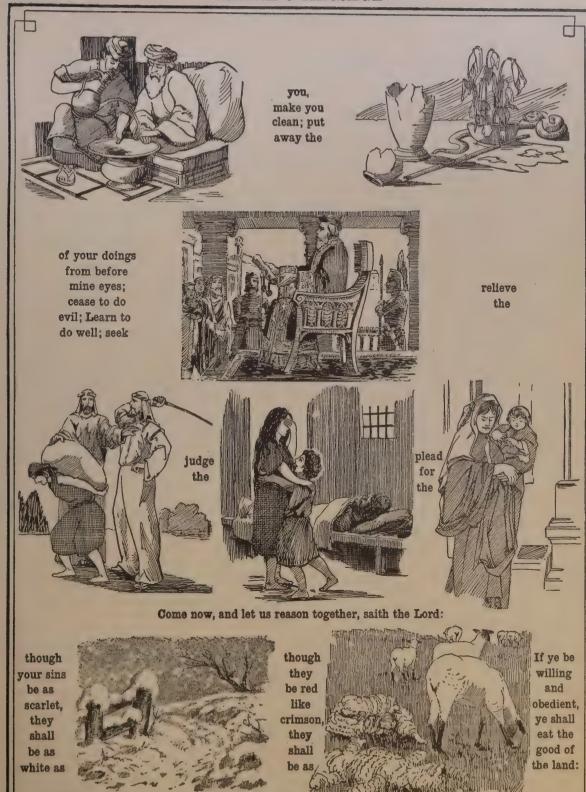


PROPHETS

From Sargent's Frieze of the Prophets by Max Biha.



ISATAH'S MESSAGE



But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord

ISA, I: 16-20.

hath spoken it.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISA. 1: 1-20.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, We thank Thee for the great salvation, by which the black stains of sin may be taken from the soul and life. May we hear Thy gracious call, "Come let us reason together," and may we be conscious of the wondrous change by which we are made "as white as snow." Help us that we may more and more cease from sin and live unto Thee. May we glorify Thee in our bodies and spirits which are Thine. For Christ's sake, Amen.

"Look up, my soul, not down; God's face will smile, not frown Look out, my heart, not in; To doubt Christ were a sin. Look forward, not behind, O troubled mind.

Trust God whate'er betide, Faith, hope and love thy guide, And Heaven thy sure reward.

Till then praise thou the Lord."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, about B. C. 758. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Isaiah warning the wicked nation.

Scripture Setting: God and the Sinner. Calamity for sin, Isa. 59:1-16. Sin condemned, Rom. 2:1-13. Deliverance possible, Isa. 54:1-17. Judgments for sin, Isa. 5:13-30. Redemption provided, Isa. 53. Life by the Spirit, Ezek. 37:1-10. The way of escape, Isa. 55:7-13. Why will ye die, Ezek. 33:7-20.

Life and Conduct Setting: In this lesson we find God's treatment of sin and the sinner. 1. As to the sin itself, He turns on the searchlight

and shows it to be (1) unnatural, by a striking illustration from the animal world; (2) rebellious and lawless; (3) stupid and foolish; (4) ungrateful; (5) self-propagating and cumulative; and (6) a grievous burden to one's self and others. 2. As to the sinner, (1) God judges and punishes him by inward moral weakness, by outward physical troubles, by national public calamities; (2) he reasons and pleads with him to turn from his sin and accept blessing and favor; (3) he promises full redemption by Christ and purification by the Holy Spirit; (4) he calls him to all kinds of service for his fellowmen.

GETTING RID OF SIN.

"Quit Your Meanness." "What a bright light that was! There it is again and again! Oh, it is that new searchlight which was placed on the court house lately." This new light made everything stand out plain and clear, and made one shrink and almost tremble whenever it swept down on him. God has been turning His great searchlight on the Jewish nation in this chapter. He has shown up the sins of the nation, and also has shown them the very nature of sin itself. By this searchlight sin is seen to be unnatural, lawless, rebellious, stupid and foolish, ungrateful, burdensome, and growing rank and horried like a bed of weeds. By His searchlight He really says to them to quit their meanness. He shows, too, that He will judge them for the sin and punish them, and also that they themselves will become weaker and weaker because of the sin. There are two great results that follow a life of sin. One is, that it fails of any real success outwardly for sin itself means "a missing of the mark." Another result is that it eats out and destroys all that is best in the heart. So it is a failure also inwardly. That first picture is a symbol of what we all need both outwardly and inwardly, namely, a thorough washing that we may be cleansed from sin.

God's X-Ray for Man's Sin. The French government has a new use for the X-ray; it uses it as a detective in the customs department. Every passenger at the customs examination has to pass in front of the X-ray apparatus, and is subjected to a most thorough examination. In a test trial recently 167 persons were examined in forty-five minutes, and on them were found all the jewels and merchandise hidden for the experiment. An expert wrapped gloves in linen and then in tissue

paper and placed them next his skin, in the region of the heart. The X-ray discovered them at once, for the buttons of the gloves had betrayed the secret. Every method of baffling it was tried, but in vain, for not a single hidden article escaped detection.—Literary Digest. Even more thorough and penetrating is God's detection and exposure of sin. "Thou God seest me."

Begin to Do Right. God calls on all of us not only to "cease to do evil but to learn to do well." We are to 'get right with God," and when we do we show it, and prove it, by doing right to man. Four classes of people are pictured out here as needing help. There are those who are deprived of their just dues for some reason, and we should "seek judgment" for such. There are some who are persecuted and oppressed in some way, and we should "relieve" them. There are the fatherless children who have no strong helper, and we should remember them always cly. There are the widows fighting life's battles alone and tenderly. who are now, and we should both help them and influence others to help them. These classes of needy people are in every community, and they will stand for any other classes. Christ said that "the poor ye have always with you." Some are poor in one way, and some in another, and to all of them we should try to be helpful as we have opportunity and ability.

Put the Label on Your Life. The "Pure Food" law provides that every label must describe truthfully the contents of the package. If a can of glucose is labeled "Vermont Maple Syrup" the manufacturer who puts it up and the dealer who sells it are liable to prosecution. In short, food, medicine, drink, what not, the thing must be what it pretends to be. Coffee must be made from the

coffee berry, lemonade from lemons and any compound containing hurtful components, as cocaine, morphine, acetanelid, or alcohol, must be so labeled. We ought to put the right labels on our lives. Then we would show what we really are and others could act intelligently. That winedrinking young man ought to be labeled. You can think of others, even boys and girls, that ought to be labeled. Label yourself.—Exchange.

A White Heart and Character. No one can do real right with the hand unless he is real right in the heart. Some people seem to be good in the life even though not right before God in the heart. But their best acts yet lack an inward heart quality-even before men; and they are altogether unacceptable to God. They may not always know this, but God does know it, and so He has sent that wonderful, wonderful message to sinful men: "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." This is the "snow" promise of salvation. Evervone should learn this, so as to repeat the whole of it. It is one of the ten greatest verses of the Bible. No matter how black and bad the heart of man be, God has planned a way to make it white. The Bible tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It is so deceitful that it deceives its owner; so Satan tries to persuade each person that he is an exception to the general rule, and is really quite good. We may much better believe God's statement, for He knows, as no one else does. We are safe, too, in taking His statement, for, at the same time. He shows us how the heart may be made right and new and clean. This we know to be by the blood of Christ in and by which we are redeemed and purified. The saved in Heaven are described as those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "robes" are the hearts and spirits which go to make the character. When you see or think of the snow and the white wool do not fail to think also of this great snow promise of salvation. It is for all everywhere, old and young, however sinful.

Whosoever Will. Look at this dollar bill. It says: "United States of America. One silver dollar, payable to the bearer on demand." That is to say that the United States promises to pay "the bearer" a dollar for this piece of paper when he demands it. Who is the bearer? He is the person that has the bill. I am the bearer just now. If you had the bill you would be the bearer. The promise is not made to John Doe or Simon Pure or Tom Taft, but to "whosoever." You can write-your name there and it will mean you. So God's promises are not given to special people,

but to all. They are yours and mine, if we claim them. Listen: "God so loved the world that (put your own name in here) should not perish." God loves all His children and wishes to bless them all.—R. P. Anderson.

Which "If" Describes You? Do you know that "if" is one of the great words in the language of conduct? It is like a great iron door or gate that often seems to shut itself before us, blocking our way. Really, it stands at the parting of the ways, and seems to send some people off towards Heaven and blessedness and others off in the opposite direction. According to one's spirit and desire he will be led into the way of life or the way of death, as this gateway of "if" opens to him; "if willing and obedient"life, and "if ve refuse and rebel"-death. The very solemn thing about these two choices is that they are final. One will send you forever along the bright way which leads to the eternal glory; and the other will send you forever along the dark way which ends in eternal misery.

Have you Started? The day the prodigal "arose and came to his father" he saved both his material and his spiritual fortunes. His remorse and his good intentions would have availed nothing unless he had actually taken up his homeward journey. The best of purposes alone would have left him still in the land of Sodom. Having brooded over his disgrace and made his plans to escape from it, he screwed his resolution to the sticking point and simply did the thing. He made up his mind to go home—and then he went. If he continued to feed swine he must give up a good father and a good home. If he chose father and home he must leave the swine. Which "if" describes you?—Exchange.

Quiz and Study. 1. How many "major" or larger prophets are there and who are they? 2. Verse 18 is one of the ten greatest verses in the Bible. Can you mention any of the other nine? 3. "What does God, the Father, do to save the sinner? 4. What does God, the Son, do? 5. What does God, the Holy Spirit, do? 6. What is necessary for the sinner to do?

What does God, the Holy Spirit, do? 6. What is necessary for the sinner to do?

Challenge Text. "If we walk in the ——, as He is in the ——, we have —— one with another, and the —— of Jesus Christ, His Son —— us from —— sin." 1 John 1: (?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Worship without obedience is an offense to God, for "to obey is better than sacrifice." 2. A sin is against God and is therefore both ungrateful and foolish, as well as rebellious. 3. The duty of service rests on all men everywhere. 4. Only by the blood of Christ redeeming and the power of the Holy Spirit cleansing and strengthening can we do that which God requires. 5. God graciously condescends to man's sinful state to reason with him. 6. Since Christ has redeemed us by His blood we should consecrate ourselves to His service. 7. The gift of life to the sinner is guaranty of every other needed blessing.

DR. J. M. COON.

ISAIAH'S VISION

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the



moved at the voice of him that cried, and the



Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a



of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew



unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken



And he

and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

ISA. VI: 3-8.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISA, 6:1-13.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou art a Savior and more. Thou art ever before us as a shining example and holy ideal. Even into the lowly bush of life's experience Thou dost come with Thy glory and Thy power. Open our dull eyes that we may see Thee in Thy alluring and commanding beauty. May we hear Thy voice calling us to greater joy and service. Help us that we may respond, "Here am I, send me." For Christ's sake, Amen.

This little place Thou hast assigned to me,
Help me, dear Lord, to fill;
Since thou hast led me here, here would I be
Obedient to Thy will.
Seeking no broader field, no nobler task,
No recognition more

Than Thine approval; this the boon I ask—
Thy light to go before.

—Ram's Horn.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 759. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Isaiah and the Heavenly messengers.

Scripture Setting: Called and Equipped. The mantle on Elisha, 2 Kings 2:1-11. Power with God, Isa. 62:1-12. David equipped, 1 Sam. 16:1-13. Disciples equipped, Luke 5:1-11. Trained by suffering, 1 Pet. 4:12-19. Like unto Moses, Acts 3:14-26. Wait on the Lord, Psa. 27. Paul called and equipped, Acts 9:5-16.

Life and Conduct Setting: Isaiah is the great spiritual forerunner of Jesus Christ as John the Baptist was the physical and temporary forerun-

ner. Next to the Apostle Paul Isaiah is one of the greatest characters in Scripture. It is interesting to note his call and anointment for service.

1. Called by a gracious revelation from Heaven, vs. 1, 2, reminding one of Paul's call. 2. Prepared by a remarkable vision of God's holiness and his own sinfulness, vs. 3-5. 3. Anointed by the purifying word and work, vs. 6, 7. 4. Receives the direct call and commission, vs. 8-10. 5. Is given an intelligent understanding of conditions, vs. 11, 12. 6. Is guided and inspired by the great germinal promise, based in and on God's purpose, vs. 13. This prediction was fulfilled again and again.

A STORY OF FOUR Vs.

First V.

The Vision. The Albert memorial monument in London is one of the most remarkable monuments in the world. High up on the third platform is a statue of King Albert, sitting in a royal chair, or throne. It was ordered built by Queen Victoria as a loving tribute to the king, her husband. How much grander is this vision of Isaiah. He sees the King of kings, living and powerful, seated on a throne "high and lifted up" and His train of attendants fills the whole temple. Or the "train" may mean His royal robes, resplendent in beauty and declaring His glory and power. For a canopy there are the seraphim angels, each with six wings, and glorious beyond description. This vision came to Isaiah in the year that the king died, king Uzziah, who had ruled in Judah for fifty-two years. Thus we see that God is not dependent on earthly kings in the workings of His providence and grace. Those splendid columns shown in the first picture give us an idea of the great temple in which the vision appeared. But soon the temple fades from view and God alone is seen on His glorious throne.

Be True to the Vision.

"With chisel in hand, stood a sculptor boy
With his marble block before him;
And his face lit up with a smile of joy,
As an angel dream passed o'er him.
He carved that dream on the yielding stone
With many a sharp incision;
In Heaven's own light the sculptor shone,
He had caught that angel vision.
Sculptors of life are we, as we stand
With our lives all uncarved before us,

Waiting the hour when, at God's command, Our life dream passes o'er us.

Let us carve it then on the yielding stone, With many a sharp incision; Its Heavenly beauty shall be our own, Our lives that angel vision.''

Second V.

The Voice. There is the voice of one angel to another saying, "Holy, holy, holy." The very posts of the door moved at the sound of this voice, and surely Isaiah must have been deeply impressed. Then the angel speaks directly to Isaiah, and says, "Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." Then, greater than all, there is the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It is not to be wondered at that Isaiah is troubled as he has a true view of himself. The pillars and posts of his own soul are moved in the midst of these holy surroundings. The voice has reached the deepest part of his being, and he is troubled. He sees himself as never before. Over against the holy angels, and the holier God he is conscious of his own sin and unworthiness. This voice sounded through him and revealed his wicked heart and life, and also the wickedness of all others about him. This voice is like the word of God, which is "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." This sword-voice of the Bible is cutting its way into every heart.

Just the Bible. Just the Bible, saying, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. Commentaries, etc., are well enough in their way, but give a half hour each day to the Bible without note or comment, and the Lord will greatly bless you. Christ's words at the beginning of His ministry ought to be our motto, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Henry G. Weston.

Third V.

The Virtue. This word really means power, and that is just the thing we need here in this story. The vision and the voice have left Isaiah altogether without power and he knows he has none in himself. Hear him: "Woe is me," "undone," "unclean." He feels as Paul describes in his letter to the Romans: "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" Paul answers his own anxious question by saying, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The assurance of the gracious power comes as quick as an echo to the cry. When the blind man cried, "Lord, that I might receive my sight!" Jesus replied, "Receive thy sight." So it is with Isaiah in his almost despairing cry. Listen: "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand;" and "he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged. 77 The virtue or power to heal and cleanse and strengthen has come from God, by Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. It is a striking and beautiful picture of salvation by the gracious power of God. The "coal from the altar" is the truth in and from the Christ, who is the Lamb slain; and the angel represents the Holy Spirit who brings the burning truth to the heart, lips, and life of sinful man. Those pictures of the angel and the coal from the altar, applied to the helpless man, all show forth the mysterious and wonderful power of God. It is power to save from sin, and comes to all who are really sorry for sin and anxious to live a better life. It is Christ's call and offer to help.

"Come Unto Me." A poor boy wandered one day into one of the great art museums of Europe. He walked down those halls and he faced one of the masterpieces of the world. He stood with his arms folded across his breast and gazed at the painting, drinking in its beauty. The fires of his genius were kindled, a new purpose mastered his life, and throwing up his hands, he exclaimed: "I also am a painter!" This purpose possessed his soul, selected and blended his colors, guided his brush and shone on his canvas until Correggio became the equal of his great master, Raphael. Study the life size portraits of the perfect life as found in the Gospels, see there what is possible in your own life, let a new purpose possess your soul and

exclaim: "I also am a Christian!" Day by day the structure will grow in solidity and beauty, for it is God who works in you to will and to do, until "Christ is formed in you, the hope of glory."

Fourth V.

The Volunteer. When the nation has need of soldiers it calls for volunteers. In the great civil war of 1861 the vounteers came from every Northern state, and each one said to his country, "Here am I; send me!" Sometimes a nation has to force men to fight the nation's enemies, and this is called drafting. But such soldiers are not as good as the volunteers. The volunteer has more spirit and purpose, and so he is more watchful, and faithful and heroic. Now, in our story there is a man who said, "Here am I; send me." Who can it be? The only man we see in the pictures is lying on his back, as if dead. Well, it is the same man; only now he is on his feet; he has heard the call of God, who is asking for volunteers. He feels in his soul that he can do that service; yes, he really desires to do it. So he springs to the front, and offers his service, and pleads that he may be accepted and sent. The love of God the Father, the sacrifice of God the Son, and the glowing and burning power of God the Holy Spirit, are all calling for and making volunteers in the many life-battles for the right.

Have You Enlisted for the War? Let us keep saying over and over again this reply of the Gospel prophet: "Here am I; send me." Are teachers in demand? "Here am I; send me." Are tract distributors wanted? "Here am I; send me." Are the poor out in the slums famishing? "Here am I; send me." Is my friend unsaved? "Here am I; send me." Are the heathen needing the Gospel? "Here am I; send me." Can I honor and glorify my Savior in any way? "Here am I; send me." Cs. Robinson.

Quiz and Study. 1. How was Moses called and equipped for work? 2. How was Paul called and equipped? 3. Tell what you can of the call of Matthew, of Peter, of John. 4. Which is the greatest book of the Bible? 5. Who is the greatest character excepting Christ??

Challenge Text. "Go ye into all the — and preach the — to every —."—Mark 16:(1).

Fractical Thoughts. 1. This "fifth Gospel"

Fractical Thoughts. 1. This "fifth Gospel" is full of the great truths of redemption—conviction of sin, conversion, regeneration, volunteer service, Divine anointing and power. 2. There must be a vision of self and sin before one will or can see the Christ Savior. 3. The burning coal of spiritual unction wins more hearts than cold reasoning. 4. Power in service is according to rullness of surrender to God. 5. God calls each soul in a different way and equips and anoints each differently. 6. How necessary, then, for each to do his own work faithfully: 7. Every church, yes, every believer, is at the center of the world, and the call of each is to the utmost bounds of the world.

Dr. J. M. Coon.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISA. 9:1-7.

Lord Jesus, Thou art wonderful in Thy nature and character; wonderful also in Thy gracious revelation of Thyself to sinful and needy man. Into this world of unrest Thou dost come and say, "Peace, be still," even as Thou didst quiet the turbulent sea. Speak peace to us, we pray, and enable us to be the heralds of Thy wonderful peace to all others. For Christ's sake, Amen.

"Unheard, because our ears are dull, Unseen, because our eyes are dim, He walks on earth-the wonderful-And all great deeds are done for Him."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, probably B. C. 734. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Isaiah portraying the character of Christ.

Scripture Setting: Jesus the Messiah. to be the Messiah, John 8:46-59. King of kings, Rev. 19:11-21. With the Father, 1 John 2:1-8. Superior to angels, Heb. 1:1-14. Worthy of homage, Philip 2:1-11. Praise to the Messiah, Psa. 118:19-29. The perfect pattern, Heb. 12:1-11. An inspiring leader, Rev. 1:10-20.

Life and Conduct Setting: Here we have a picture of the world Saviour in His origin, char-

acter, work and influence. 1. Jesus Christ is a God-given Messiah, lifting Him above all human saviours, vs. 1. 2. Jesus Christ is a sadly needed Messiah, vs. 1, 2. 3. Jesus Christ is a wonderful Messiah, in the marvelous transformations of His grace, v. 3. 4. Jesus Christ is a strong and conquering Messiah, v. 4. 5. Jesus Christ is a peaceloving and peace-making Messiah, v. 5. 6. Jesus Christ is a God-Messiah; not merely Divine but Himself very God. 7. Jesus Christ is an achieving and enduring Messiah, v. 7.

A PICTURE OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR.

Jesus Christ a Human Saviour. Does that first picture make you think of another baby, that one of our stories was about? He, also, became a great deliverer and saved his people. He himself was saved in a remarkable way when he was three months old. Yes, it was Moses; and he was intended to represent Christ who was to come. This is a prophecy of the way he would come—"unto us a child is born." In order to be a real Saviour, full of sympathy and a knowledge of human nature and needs, it was necessary for Him to be just like us in every way. So he was born into the world of a human mother, as other babies are born. His true father was the Holy Spirit, but Joseph was called His father because he took care of Him. His mother's name was Mary. Every Christmas time we study about the wonderful Christ child who was God's Son in His glorious Heavenly home and who freely left it all and came down, down to earth to save us from our sins. At His birth the angel said that His name should be Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins." In Paul's letter to the Philippians, second chapter, verses 6-8, we are shown how many steps of humiliation Christ took in order to begin His work of salvation. He was equal with God in Heaven, and always had been. Then He stepped down by throwing off His robes of glory and power; He stepped down by making Himself a servant; He stepped down by taking on human nature, like us in all points except sin; He stepped down by giving up His life for us; He stepped down by submitting to the worst form of death, even the death of the cross and by being classed with the wicked.

A Sympathetic Saviour. Some time ago I met with a picture representing two women in great Standing behind the chairs on which they were sitting there appeared the figure of Christ stretching out his hand over them. They could not see him, because their eyes were dim, but he was none the less present with them. He was near in

all his effulgent brightness, with all his sympathetic consolation, and with all his helpful power.

What we need is the power to see—to see chariots and horses on the mountains; to see God all about us; to see the strong right arm of the Almighty stretched out to help us; to see that the darkest clouds and most threatening surround. the darkest clouds and most threatening surroundings are under the all-controlling power of the Everlasting Father.—Exchange.

Jesus Christ a God Saviour. It is better to say God Saviour, rather than merely a Divine Saviour. Even saved people are Divine for they are the sons of God, and have His Divine nature. Christ is more than Divine. He is God for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," referring to His taking our nature upon Himself. speaking of Christ it is better to use the word Deity, instead of Divinity; then all will know that we mean His Godhead. Many people, who deny His Deity, are yet willing to admit His Divinity. A man once said to another, "If you will show me a passage of Scripture which says that Christ is God, I will believe it." His friend quoted that verse in 1 John, "This is the true God and eternal life," referring to Christ who had just been named. If that would not satisfy anyone, this list here of five great names would surely do it. And if he should still be unbelieving it would be true of him as was said of another, "He will not believe though one rose from the dead." Yes, Jesus Christ, the Saviour is "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

"Wounded in the House of His Friends." The most dangerous blasphemers of our day are those so-called Christians who, in the name of religion, and with an open Bible, deny that Jesus is the Son of God. They are the ecclesiastical descendants of the scribes, who called Jesus a blasphemer, because He forgave sins. If He was not God, the scribes were right in calling Him a blasphemer. But how much more flagrant is this heresy in our day, after all the light and testimony that history has thrown upon the Divine character of Christ.

Jesus Christ a Conquering Saviour. may know that He is because He is God, and the mighty God. He is able to overcome all enemies, even Satan and his hosts. Every one of these other names suggests the qualities of the conqueror. He is "Wonderful" in many ways, and not least in the extent and glory of His Kingdom. He is "Counsellor" and having all wisdom. His plans are made to outwit and destroy His enemies. He is the "Everlasting Father." and therefore Creator and controller of all persons and things. He is the "Prince of Peace," and so must have overcome all things that opposed Him in order to establish His reign of peace. The angel message of "peace on earth good-will to men" is being more and more fulfilled. The glorious time when "nations shall learn war no more" is drawing nearer and nearer, and all because Jesus Christ is a conquering Saviour. But best of all, Jesus Christ conquers sin in the world and in man. He saves "to the uttermost all who come unto Him." He makes man pure and clean by His blood and makes him strong and beautiful by putting His Holy Spirit within him. We are apt to describe a great person by several names and titles, which show what he is and what he does. The Bible is the record of what Jesus Christ is and of what He does. In it there are five hundred and twentyfive names and titles to describe Him. Each of these names sets forth one or more trait of character or kind of work. Each one shows Christ in some new light. The whole Bible is as it were the setting for the display of this priceless jewel of Heaven, this "pearl of great price," this diamond character, this "sunburst of God's love and mercy."

The Cross the Secret and Sign of His Power. In and by and on the cross He was a King. Even His enemies affirmed His kingship in the inscriptions placed on that cross. With regal power on the cross He dismissed His life, no one being able to take it from Him; and with Divine potency He took it again to Himself and rose from the grave, King over death and hades. Christ is almighty

to deliver us from sin, from its pollution and its consequences. Who is He that marches forth, glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? The resistless Conqueror answers: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." -R. S. MacArthur.

Jesus Christ an Eternal Saviour. As He never had any beginning so He will never have any end. He is forever and forever. and His saving work, His Kingdom of righteousness, is forever and forever." Of the increase of His government there shall be no end * * * from henceforth even forever." All of the great promises that were made to Abraham, to David, and to the kingdom of Israel were made because of the Christ who was to come; and they are all fulfilled only in and by Christ. He and His kingdom are eternal also, because established upon principles that are eternal—justice, righteousness, love and holiness. As nature seems to be exhaustless in the number and extent of her powers, and in the myriad applications to human need and comfort; so Christ is absolutely exhaustless and enduring in all His work as a Saviour. The crown and climax of assurance are given in that closing word of the Scripture lesson, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

"Because He First Loved Us." Mamma, I am tired of loving my dolly." "Why, my child?" "Oh, because she never loves me back." "And is that why you love me?" "That is one reason, mamma, but not the first one, or the best." mamma, but not the first one, or the best."
"What is the first and best reason, then, my
darling?" "Why, mamma, it's because you loved
me when I was too little to love you back. That's
why I love you so much now." The little girl,
you see, was giving the thought that the Bible
has about the Lord Jesus Christ, "We love him,
because he first loved us."—Sel.

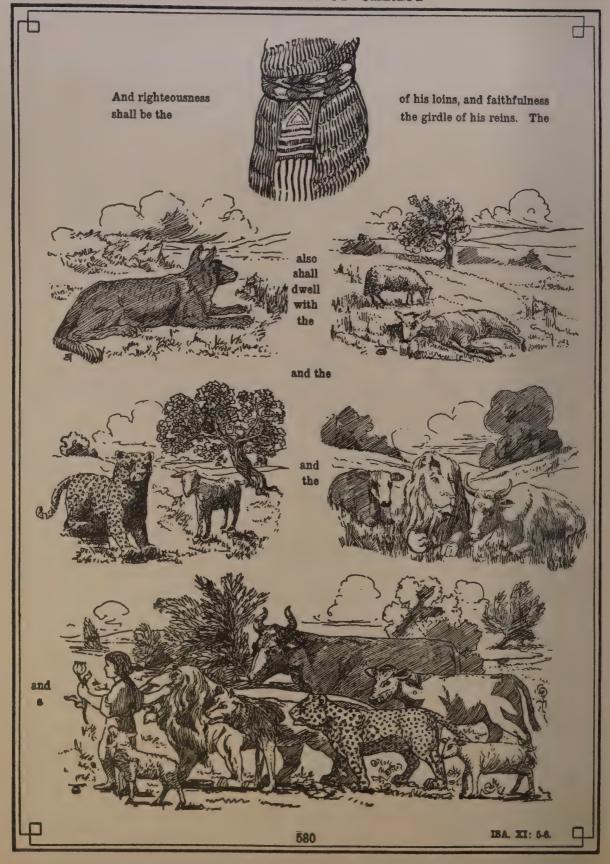
Quiz and Study. 1. There are four great names of Christ in the lesson. What other names does He have? 2. Mention six great facts about Christ.

3. Quote some of Christ's great sayings.

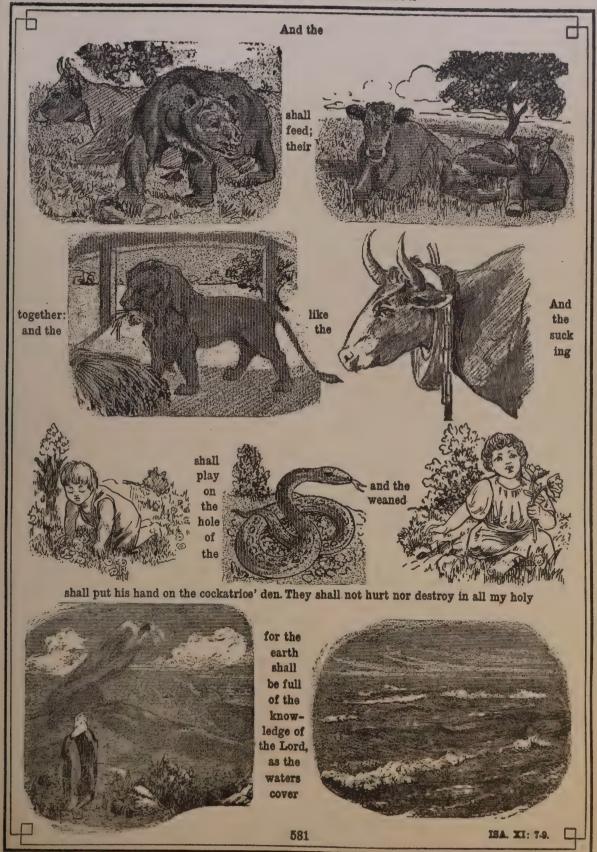
Challenge Text. Wherefore God, also hath highly

Him, and given Him a — which is above name. Philip. 2:(?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Jesus Christ is the commanding character in all history. 2. Bedemption is a covenant between God the Father and God the Son. Man gets the benefit of it by accepting it. 3. God's 'nevertheless' of grace and opportunity comes to every man again and again. 4. It is the greatest folly and sin to refuse allegiance to God and his Messiah-King. 5. Everyone must bow to Christ as Saviour or submit to him as Lord. 6. There is no salvation except through acceptance of Jesus the Messiah. 7. The Christ Kingdom differs from world kingdoms, as to its origin, spirit, method of government, elements of power, universality. 8. World empire is realized only by Jesus Christ and by the spiritual energy of love and sacrifice.



THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISA, 11:1-10.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou art a right and glorious King, and Thy Kingdom shall extend over all the earth. Speed the day when Thou shalt come into full power in all lands. Grant unto Thy people to "be willing in the day of Thy power" that they may go forth conquering and to conquer. For Christ's sake, Amen.

"I may not stay to see the day
When the great Saviour shall bear sway,
And earth shall glitter in the ray
That cometh from above;
But come it fast or come it slow,
'Twill come at last, I surely know,
And Heaven and earth shall feel the glow,
And men shall call it Love.''

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 720 to 711 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Person, Isaiah foretelling the glory of Christ's Kingdom.

Christ's Kingdom.

Scripture Setting: Christ and His Kingdom. The King of glory, Psa. 24. The King of peace, Zech. 9:9-17. The righteous King, Jer. 23:1-8. A mighty Kingdom, Psa. 45:1-7. A universal Kingdom, Dan. 7:9-14. The King of life, Col. 3:1-11. A returning King, Acts 1:1-11. A world-wide Kingdom, Isa. 61:1-11.

Life and Conduct Setting: The inspired prophet gives a picture of Christ and His Kingdom. 1. As to the King: (1) He is to be of the line of

David, according to the purpose of God; (2) He is to be a spiritual King, as the representative of God; (3) He is to be a wise King, surpassing all the wisdom of man; (4) He is to be a just King, punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous. 2. As to the Kingdom itself: (1) It shall be a Kingdom of peace; (2) It shall be a Kingdom of new natures and new conditions; (3) It shall be a Kingdom in coöperation with God; (4) It shall be a world-wide Kingdom; (5) It shall be the Kingdom of the true "golden age," ushering in the millenium.

THE GREATEST KINGDOM IN THE WORLD.

A Kingdom With the Greatest King. Great preparations were made for the coronation of Geoge V, King of England. He is doubtless the greatest earthly king today, and rules over a larger extent of territory than any other. But the King of this Kingdom we are thinking of is a greater, far greater King, than king George, or all earthly monarchs combined. It is King Jesus, the Son of God, who came to earth for the express purpose of founding a Kingdom, as He said to Pilate at one time. In that first picture of a girdle we see the kind of a King Christ is: namely a righteous King and a faithful King. These qualities are spoken of as "girdles," which means that they bind together and control all else, as a girdle does the flowing robes. The first verses of this chapter describe this Christ King as of the line of David: spiritual, wise, and infinitely just and tender. Jesus Christ comes in the power of God, and according to the purpose of God, and fulfills all the glorious prophecies of God; and all because He is God Himself, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

The Wonderful Christ King. We celebrate His birthday throughout the world; we date our letters from the year of His birth; we offer in Congress and Parliaments prayers in His name. The history of His life is printed in four hundred languages. Kings and emperors, presidents and judges, statesmen and scholars, peasants and slaves, declare this to be the greatest and best of all books. Thousands of magnificent buildings have been erected to Him—abbeys, cathedrals and churches. Our greatest colleges were dedicated to this poor boy who never went to college, never left His own little country, and died when He was only thirty-three years old. From His life and death painters, poets, orators and musicians have gained their highest inspiration. His loyal subjects are num-

bered by millions and increasing at the rate of almost a million a year.—Selected.

A Kingdom That Changes the Inner Nature. Here are named some of the animals having the very strongest animal instincts. They are blood-thirsty, ravenous and with desperate cunning to kill and destroy. Men by nature have some such instincts; and someone has said that every kind of animal may find its likeness among men. So when we are told that these fierce natures of animals will be changed it means then all that is wrong and wicked and vicious in man can be corrected. Look at this wonderful picture of the power in and from this Kingdom of Christ. There is something very remarkable about it. The wolf is changed in the nature like the lamb it has sought to seize from the sheepfold; the leopard lies down with the kid it has hunted among the mountains and precipices; the lion lives peaceably with the calf or ox it has been accustomed to carry off bodily; the bear feeds with the cow it used to hug to death and eat. The asp and the cockatrice, one of the smallest and one of the largest of venomous serpents, become so harmless that the very child may play with them. This is all a striking picture of the power of the Christ King and His Kingdom of transforming force. By this power men who swear and drink, who are selfish, sinful and vicious, are made good, gentle, kind and holy.

Voice and Power of the Blood. How often have we listened to the "noises of the sea" as we placed the sea shell to our ears! A recent writer tells us that this is but the sound of the blood as it circulates through our veins and is echoed in the empty shell. The sound of the blood! What

is all this singing of praise that we hear in our churches and at our home altars? What these glad tidings proclaimed from our pulpits from Sabbath to Sabbath? What these evening and morning prayers, these dying confessions of God's dear ones as they wait the endless dawn? They are the voices of the blood that followed the Roman spear and flowed from the pierced brow and the wounded hands and feet. Oh, the sound of the Saviour's blood! It has given the keynote to the world's sweetest music and has changed human animals into saints, bringing blessing to the world. It has changed the sigh of the sin-cursed soul to an eternal song of praise.—Exchange.

A Kingdom That Wins by Love and Gentleness. Look at that large picture of the little child leading those animals. Not only are their ferocious natures changed, but they are led by a child. This means that they are controlled and used by the child forces. These forces are specially love and gentleness. One may not think there is much force in love and gentleness. It is true they do not win by force, but nevertheless they are the most winning forces. I like also to see a picture of the Babe of Bethlehem in that little child. Anyhow we know that the Christ child told us about these great forces of love and gentleness, and also showed us how to use them. So now, more and more every year, a man who is saved and has become as a little child in his nature is leading and controlling the human wolves, leopards, bears and lions. This new power in and from Christ changes their very natures and makes them helpers and workers for the Kingdom of Christ. Christ is changing and conquering the world, not by a war of destruction but in a movement of rebuilding through love and kindness in righteousness.

A Spiritval Kingdom. Christ is our King by virtue of legitimate conquest. But how different is the line of action of our Heaveniy King in His conquest of our soul from the course pursued by earthly generals in subduing temporal kingdoms! Alexander the Great established an empire by wading through the blood of his fellow men. By the sword he con-quered, and by the sword he kept his subjects in bondage. Our Divine Ruler obtained the victory over the kingdom of our hearts, not by the material sword, but by "sword of the Spirit which is the word of God;" not by enslaving our bodies, but by rescuing our souls from the bondage of sin; not by shedding the blood of others, but by the shedding of His own blood.-Exchange.

A Kingdom That Is World-wide. A worldwide empire has been the dream of man in all ages. No one has ever been able to realize the dream, even in the low plane of earthly and selfish ambition. But Jesus Christ, the God-man, had this dream of a world-wide Kingdom and He came from

Heaven to establish it. We have seen that it was a Kingdom of blessing and peace, and was to be founded on love. No mere man ever even thought of those things. Christ has not only thought of them, but has purposed to secure them. Those last two pictures show two ways in which Christ will accomplish this world empire. One is by so binding and controlling the evil, that it cannot do any harm anywhere. The other is by the giving of the Gospel to the world, and covering the whole earth with the blessings of the Gospel, "as the waters cover the sea." This triumph of Christ's kingdom is absolutely certain, for God says that it "shall be." We see that it is already accomplished in the purpose of God, and that is a good assurance that it will be accomplished in the hearts and lives of men everywhere. It is necessary for us to do two things. One is to consecrate ourselves wholly to this King and Kingdom and let Christ rule in our being, which is itself a little Kingdom. The other is to consecrate all our powers, time, toil, prayers, money, to the extension of Christ's Kingdom in all the earth. Then speedily shall the kingdoms of this world "become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

Enduring Because Right. Only such a kingdom can endure. Nothing is really settled till it is settled right. The powers of evil seem very strong, but every one is doomed to fall before Christ. The forces of intemperance shall be destroyed; organized oppression shall be broken; heathenism shall fall; infidelity be overthrown; slavery cease. The prince of darkness in darkest England, darkest Africa, and darkest America shall be torn from his throne, and the light shall scatter the darkness, and the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings shall change winter into spring, and night into day.—Exchange.

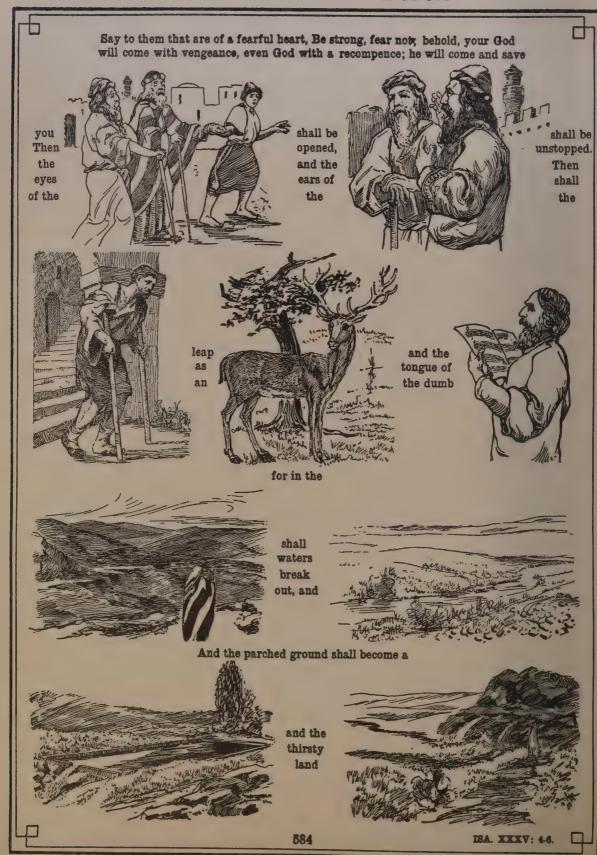
Quiz and Study. 1. Who is the rightful owner of the world? 2. Who is in possession now? 3. What are the ways in which He is winning the world? 4. When and to whom did Christ say, "That He was a King"?

Challenge Text. "Yet have I set my --- upon

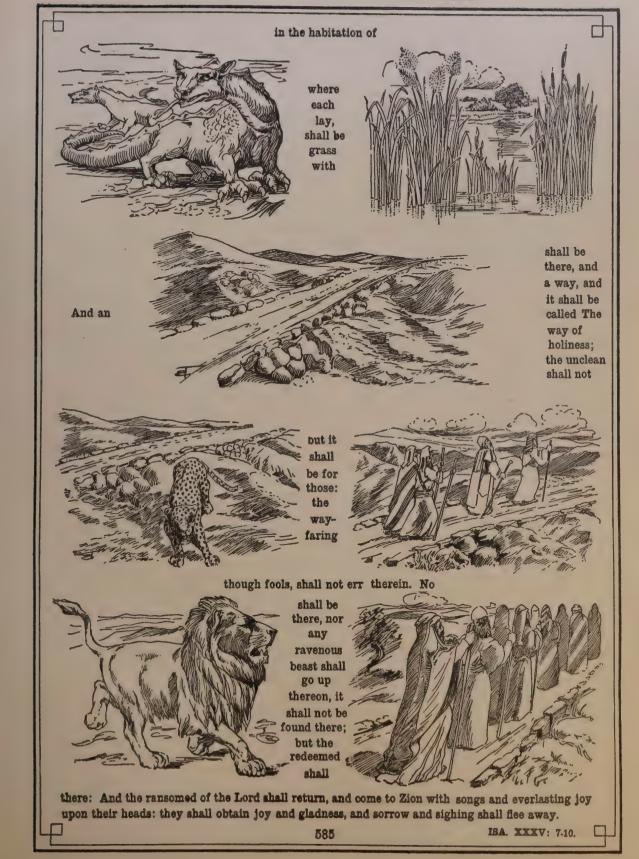
my holy — of Zion." Psa. 2: (1).

Practical Thoughts. 1. It is our privilege and duty to pray for the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit. 2. Love to man is the great solvent. of many problems. 3. The true Christian worker adapts his efforts to the case in hand. 4. If we should breathe more of the oxygen of Heaven and God we could have a higher life and do better work. 5. We should treat the animal world with more kindness and consideration. 6. Our present conduct should be keyed to the ideal consumation as here pictured. 7. Since the earth is the Lord's He will give it to us as soon as we claim it by missionary consecration. 8. The story of Christ never grows old, and charms all classes and conditions.

Dr. J. M. Coon.



THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISA. 35: 1-10.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou hast spoken great words to man; words that tell of varied and wonderful mercies. May we hear and believe and receive. The peace and joy which Thou dost give we will seek to urge upon others. May we be blessed that we may bless others. Glorify Thyself by enlarging and extending Thy Kingdom unto all the earth. For Christ's sake, Amen.

Climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou Look higher, then, perchance, thou mayest—beyond A hundred ever-rising mountain lines, And past the range of Night and Shadow—see The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day Strike on the Mount of Vision.—Tennyson.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting. Time, about 713 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Isaiah pleading with the people. Scripture Setting: Gospel Blessin, s. Full Forgiveness, Jer. 31:31-34. Eternal life, John 11:21-27. Salvation to all, Titus 2:1-14. Sustaining grace, Isa. 43:1-13. Christ's abiding presence, Matt. 28:11-20. The Holy Spirit, Joel, 2:21-29. The many promises, 1 Pet. 1:4-13. The motive power, 2 Cor. 5:14-19.

Life and Conduct Setting. The whole chapter is

a beautiful picture of the privileges and blessings of the Gospel. 1. The Gospel transforms the most cheerless conditions and surroundings, vs. 1, 2, 2, It encourages and strengthens and inspires, vs. 3, 4, 3. It awakens, girds and energizes all the powers, vs. 5, 6, 4. It refreshes, purifies, and blesses. vs. 6, 7, 5. It provides many guiding, helpful, and protecting providences, vs. 8, 9, 6. It supplies abundant and abiding joys, v. 10. All are assured and secured in the love, purpose and power of God.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Blessings of the Body. "That is the best investment I ever made." The speaker probably had in mind mere money values. He may have invested in a mine, or in the manufacture of some invention. And we know that sometimes a comparatively small outlay will bring in very large returns. Or, he may have referred to an education for himself or another, or to some experience or sacrifice by which he was stirred and spurred to a life work. All of these are good and right in themselves, and they may be very good investments. But when we begin the Christian life by a personal, heart acceptance of Jesus Christ as a Savior, we have made the very best investment that anyone could possibly make; and best in every way, both for this life and for that which is to come.

The first five pictures seem to set forth the blessings of the body. They may point also to inner blessings. But, it is asked, does the Christian life give one eyes and ears and feet and tongue? Yes, indeed, in the sense that the Christian sees and hears much that the unsaved person cannot know or understand. The man who is physically blind or deaf is unable to enjoy the physical beauties of this life. Just so the man who is spiritually blind or deaf is shut away from the spiritual beauties of this earthly life. The same is true of the feet and tongue of the Christian. Every physical power is quickened and enlarged by the new heart and new life.

Fanny Crosby's Investment. Fanny Crosby, the blind hymn writer, was once speaking in one of the missions in New York City. Suddenly she stopped and said, "I wonder if there is not some wandering boy in this audience this evening who would have the courage to step out and come and stand by my side so that I might put my arms around him and kiss him for his mother?"

There was a hush upon the audience; then a boy from a rear seat started and came to the platform, and, with her arms about him and her lips against his cheek, for his mother's sake, Fanny Crosby said, "Oh, my friends, let us rescue the perishing." From this meeting she went to her home and, sitting in her room, wrote "Rescue the Perishing," a hymn which has been sung around the world.

Some years ago she spoke in St. Louis at a great meeting and related the incident. Before she had finished a man sprang to his feet and said, "Miss Crosby, listen to me. I am a prosperous merchant in this city, a husband and a father, a Christian, and an officer in the church. I was the boy around whom you threw your arms." This was the result of seeing the worth of a soul in a young boy. It was a good investment, which resulted in the birth of that immortal hymn, and of that immortal soul.—Exchange.

Blessings of the Soul. The pictures of the waterbrook and streams, and pool and springs seem to tell of the inner life and power. The benefits of this kind in the Christian life are even more marked than the physical blessings. Then, too, they are of a higher grade. Some people even though they are not Christians, seem to have physical and bodily blessings quite equal to those who are Christians. But when it comes to blessings of the inner life the difference is seen at once. Such blessings cannot be manufactured so readily. What are some of the blessings which are suggested by the water in various forms? The water breaking out is like that joy which only a Christian can have. The "streams in the desert" are the patience and contentment in time of trial. The "pool" and "springs" are the real pleasures the Christian has, over against the sinful pleasures of the worldly; pleasures which only deceive and disappoint. The figure is that of the mirage, as it is called, which really means a false pool that represents only an imaginary pleasure.

Christian pleasures are satisfactory and lifegiving and like wells of water, bringing refreshing to the Christian and others.

Pandita Ramabai's Wells. Those who have visited Pandita Ramabai's settlement at Mukti will remember the large wells, with their abundant supply of water. The Mukti Prayer Bell tells of the naming of these sources of life after the names of naming of these sources of life after the names of the fruits of the Spirit—Priti (Love), Anand (Joy), Shanti (Peace), Dhir (Long-suffering), Upakar (Goodness), Vishvas (Faith), Kripa (Mercy), Upa-lati (Springing Up), Sanjeevani (Reviving), Asha (Hope). As each well was dug, the 55th chapter of Isaiah was read and prayer offered.

The spot is already marked for another well, which is to be called Jacob's well. It is to be on the roadside, where any passer-by may have a drink of water and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "Please pray," says the Prayer Bell, "that the wayfarers may hear, believe, and be saved."—

Bombay Guardian.

Blessings of Providence. Providence is a big word, but one which every one should learn to speak early. It is full of the wisdom, goodness and care of God. Every one is daily receiving the blessings of Providence. A great preacher announced once as the subject of his sermon, "Every man's life a plan of God." That meant that God was thinking of him and ordering all his life. Surely then the Christian is in God's good hands constantly, and is guarded and guided by Him. That picture of the "dragons" is a terrible looking one, and suggests one of the evils the Christian is protected against. Then a "highway" is cast up for the Christian to walk on: a "holy way" on which no bad and unclean persons shall go. It will be made plain to him also, just as if some one was beside him saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast." This may refer to Satan, who "goes about as a roaring lion;" and his demons, which might rend and tear those they possessed. There will be the company of only the "redeemed," each helping and comforting the others. Altogether it is a beautiful picture of the love and care of God by his constant Providence.

How Providence Saved Livingstone. When Livingstone went to Africa, there was a Scotch woman named Mrs. MacRobert, quite advanced in life, who had saved up thirty pounds, which she gave to the great missionary, saying: "When you go to Africa, I want you to spare yourself exposure and needless toil by hiring some competent body-servant who will go with you wherever you go, and share your sacrifices and exposures." With that money he hired his faithful servant known as Sebalwe. When the lion had thrown Livingstone down and crushed the bones of his left arm, and was about

to destroy him, this man, seeing his critical condition, drew off the attention of the lion to himself, thinking that he would save his master at the cost of his own life. The lion sprang at him, but just at that moment the guns of other companions brought him down, and Livingstone's life was prolonged for thirty years.-Exchange.

Blessings of Eternal Jovs. The word which often describes this earthly life is pain, or at least unrest and uncertainty. This is particularly true of those who are not Christians, and to some extent is true even of Christians. But the prevailing keynote of the Christian life is joy. It is a joy which is inward in the heart, and outward on the lips. It is a joy which is eternal, and brings blessings on their heads. It is a joy which is complete for "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." In that tree of nine kinds of fruit, grown and ripened by the Holv Spirit, joy is second in the list. See Gal. 5:22, 23.

Love is named first, and all will agree that love should be first. Joy is next, and really is itself full of the spirit and flavor and beauty of love. In the ten "blesseds" of Christ's sermon on the mount, joy is the ground note of each, and at the last it swells into a loud song and chorus, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad." In joy we find much of "the Christian secret of a

happy life."

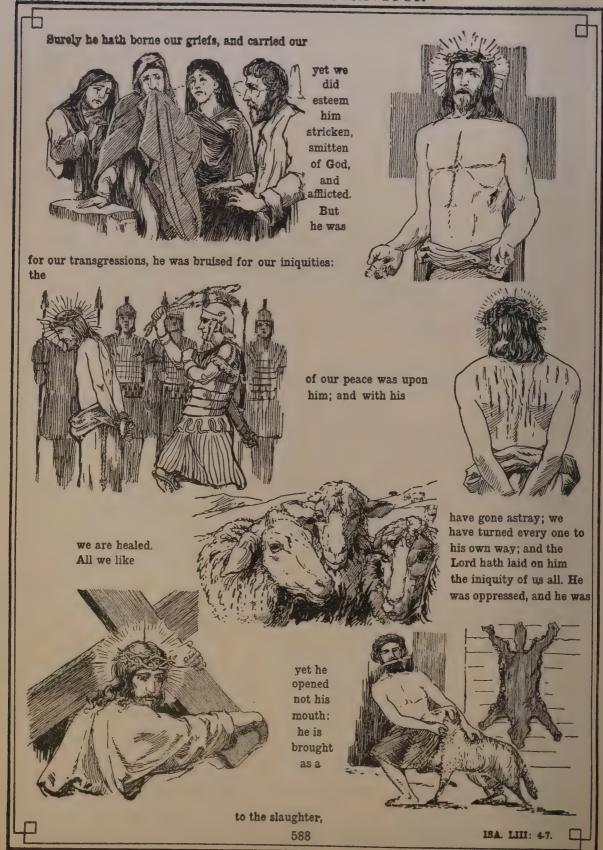
Joy In and Through Gethsemane. We are apt to thing of Gethsemane only as a garden of sorrow, which we enter with emotions of deepest and saddest sympathy. But Gethsemane has its bright side, a side of glory and joy. Under those olive trees, within sight of those sleeping disciples, there stood one of angelic brightness and beauty by the Master, bringing comfort and strength to His vic-torious spirit. The garden that echoed lately with the cry of agony was illuminated with a Heavenly radiance and glory.-Exchange.

Quiz and Study. 1. How many "Blesseds" are in Christ's sermon on the Mount? How many can you recite? 2. What benefits has the Gospel brought to your home or town? 3. What blind man did Christ heal? What deaf man? What lame man?

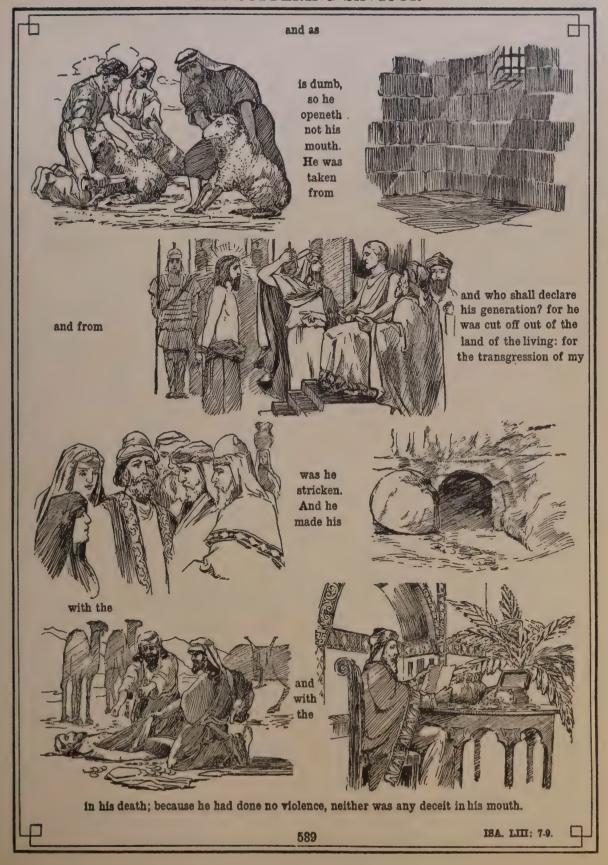
Challenge Text. "But my God shall - all your need, according to His riches in — Jesus.'' Philip. 4:(?). - by Christ

Practical Thoughts. 1. They who work in and by the Gospel have the very power of God. 2. be conscious of one's weakness is the first condition of strength. 3. The Church should always take special care of all unfortunates. 4. The most unlikely conditions are often made to minister to spiritual good. 5. Some people are so wise as to make themselves fools in spiritual matters. 6. God's "shalls" are the sure guaranty of all the believers' blessings.

Dr. J. M. Coon.



THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISAIAH 52:13-53:12.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou art the lowly One and therefore the enthroned One. Thy Gethsemane and Calvary have made Thee mighty to save. Thou art worshiped on earth, and glorified in Heaven, because Thou didst suffer and die. May the time speed to us swiftly when Thou shalt "be satisfied." Make us to be more consecrated in service, even to the vicarious spirit, in sacrifice for others. For Christ's sake, Amen.

'Thus wer't Thou made all mine; Lord make me wholly Thine, Grant grace and strength Divine To me.

"In thought and word and deed. Thy will to do; Oh, lead My soul, even though it bleed, To Thee."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 712 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Isaiah describing Jesus Christ in

Scripture Setting: The Suffering Saviour. A glorious Saviour, Rev. 5. A despised Saviour, Psa. 22. A necessary Saviour, Heb. 2:1-15. A vicarious Saviour, Heb. 10:5-22. A life-giving Saviour, Col. 3:1-11. A victorious Saviour, Rev. 19:6-21. A purchasing Saviour, 1 Pet. 1:12-25. A Saviour for all, Isa. 49:1-13.

Life and Conduct Setting: Here is the fullest picture of the Christ in His sacrificial work. The prophet depicts Him as (1) A glorious Saviour, 52:13-15; (2) A rejected and misunderstood Saviour, 53:1-3; (3) A sorrowing Saviour, vs. 3, 4; (4) A sin-bearing, vicarious Saviour, vs. 4-6; (5) A suffering Saviour, vs. 7-8; (6) A dying Saviour, vs. 8, 9; (7) An interceding and victorious Saviour, vs. 10-12; (8) A transforming and comforting Saviour.

THE MAN WHO DIED FOR ME.

A Sorrowing Saviour. A man was seen in deep grief before a grave in a Southern cemetery. "Was it a relative of yours?" he was asked by a sympathetic person who witnessed his great sorrow. "No, no; he saved my life." Then he told the story of his being drafted into the army in a Northern state. He was distressed because he had to leave wife and family, and in not the best circumstances. The neighbor came to him and said, "I am a single man, and I will go to war for you." He even urged it, and finally the father consented for the sake of his family. His friend went, suffered much in many ways, and at last died in prison and was buried in a strange land. This grateful father came South whenever he could, and placed an evergreen wreath on the grave of the man who died for him.

Those first four pictures eloquently tell the story of Christ's sacrifices and sufferings because he came to take our place, and die for us. Did Christ ever smile? To look at the first picture, one would think not. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," because our sins were upon Him. But I think this ought to be said that Christ had a smile in His heart for everyone. To those who know Him as their Saviour, "He is altogether lovely," and "the chiefest among ten thousand." To the penitent sinner there is no more beautiful face in all the world, than the face of the sorrowing Saviour. Look at those three other pictures— "wounded," "bruised," and "stripes," and

remember that He bore it all, for you.
Sorrowing, But Saving. My study of the life of
Jesus has showed me that wherever He appeared sorrow disappeared, and I am sure that He wishes in the same way to drive sorrow out of my life. In a harsh world of pain one of the works of God is to "wipe away all tears from our eyes."

Christ saves us from sorrow by giving us the right point of view. We weep because we do not understand. Have I erred? Why weep? Weeping will not help the mistake. Let me rather try to rectify my error; or, if that be impossible, do the thing again, and do it right. Has death taken from us a loved one? Christ points to the Father's house above and says, "Rejoice; he has gone to the Father." Have we suffered loss? What matter, if we have treasure in Heaven?-R. P. Ander-

A Sin-Bearing Saviour. Why must this God-man suffer so much? There are two great reasons; one is because He loved so much, and the other is because man sinned so much. That word "so" is a great little word. We see its full meaning in John 3:16, "God so loved," etc. But it has equally great meaning in the expressions, "Christ so suffered," and "man so sinned." All three of these expressions belong together and each one helps to explain the others. Nothing but the death of Christ could atone for, or take away, the sin of

Now look at that picture of the sheep, and we get another thought or two as to man's sin. The sheep without a shepherd is the very picture of helplessness; ignorant of what to do, and an easy prey to the wild animal. Sin makes man like that, for all sin is a "missing of the mark," a failing to find safety and help. But perhaps you are thinking that sheep in general, in the flock, might be helpless and in peril; and that you as an individual sheep will be able to escape. The next clause is for anyone who may fancy he is not included. It reads, "We have turned everyone to his own way." Even if many others lead you into evil, yet you are individually responsible, for you have chosen to go with them, or to let them entice you. In all this sin-bearing work of the Saviour, how

much of patient, tender and persistent love is required in order to rescue a wayward,

frightened, helpless sheep.

Charge Me With It. A young man had gotten into evil ways, lost his position, lost the confidence of those who knew him. Finally, in a distant city during a tent meeting, he was led to Christ by a business man. He must now take a new start, but how can he in a business way? This business man was a practical Christian, and talked over with the young man his future. The young man had the business skill to hold a position, but he said he was owing a number of small sums back in the town where he formerly worked and that no one would believe in his conversion unless he could settle these. His benefactor had him get statements of his debts and gave him money to pay them all, and so gave him a new chance. Thus Christ cancels all the past sins of the soul, and gives a new nature and the Holy Spirit.—Exchange.

Saviour Dying for Man. This gospel prophet, who is sometimes called the fifth evangelist, gives the fullest picture of Christ dying for, and in the place of sinful man. Though written seven hundred years before Christ, yet he gives us the most striking and clear account of Christ's death. Surely God gave him the revelation, and just as surely it was necessary for it to be given and for man to know it. The reason Christ had to die in order to be a sin-bearer is because sin called for the death of the sinner. If he is saved then someone else must die. Jesus

Christ comes to be that person.

Sin is not only "a missing the mark," but it is "transgression," which means opposi-tion to God; and it is "iniquity," which means the upsetting of all man's powers; and it is "wickedness," which means weakness and utter helplessness. We do not wonder then, that Christ had to die for the sinner. Do not fail to note how willingly Christ gave His life, as shown in the "lamb" picture, and the "sheep before her shearers." Though Christ knew that He must die if He saved the sinner, yet His heart love was so great that He did not turn back, or waver at any time; but He "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," which meant His unjust trial, condemnation and crucifixion. He endured it all patiently and willingly. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." That "judgment" picture looks very real, with the Pilate face in it, so many hundred years before Pilate was born. The whole prophecy is wonderful, and can apply only to Christ.

He Died For Me.
Under an Eastern sky,
Amid a rabble cry,
A man went forth to die,
For me.

Thorns crowned His blessed head Blood stained His weary tread, Cross laden He was led, For me,

Pierced were His hands and feet, Three hours o'er Him beat Fierce rays of noontide heat, For me.

His path lay through Gethsemane and Calvary, and He knew that He must take it alone.—Ex.

A Conquering Saviour. As we look at the last pictures, and read of Christ's burial, we may think it does not look much like victory. But look deeper, and we will see that the thought of conquest and victory necessarily follows from the remarkable fulfillments of prophecy. The Scripture says, "He made His grave with the wicked," which means that His enemies intended to have Him buried with the wicked, and really did crucify Him with them. This latter prophecy is literally fulfilled. The prophecy "and with the rich" is also fulfilled; but in order to its fulfillment their purpose to bury Him with the wicked had to be defeated. This was done through Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. So it came to pass, in a way which one would scarcely believe possible. We conclude, therefore, that all will be as foretold in the Bible, which pictures Christ as a conquering Saviour. In the closing verses of this very chapter it is said that "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied:" also this triumph is because of His sacrifice and His intercession. Christ has earned the right to victory and conquest, and He will receive it in fullest degree. Now, do not forget that all this suffering and sinbearing was for you, you. In nine verses it is stated that it is "for us," and four times in verse five alone. Instead of "for us" or "our" or "we," read "for me," "my" and "I" and then you get the true vision of the suffering Saviour. Will you put a wreath of love and choice and sacrificing service on the cross of Him who died for you?

Quiz and Study. 1. What seven kinds of suffering did Christ endure. 2. This is one of the ten greatest chapters in the Bible. Can you name any of the other nine? 3. By what marks can we tell the true Christ? 4. To whom is Christ beautiful? 5. The Saviour is called the Lord Jesus Christ. Give the meaning of each of those names.

Challenge Text. "Thus it is — and thus it behoved Christ to — and to rise from the — on the third day." Luke 24:(?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, and revealed in the New. 2. Christ the God-man dying in the place of sinful man is the central truth of the Gospel. 3. Christ is the only Saviour, for there is no other Son of God to die for man.



every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy



without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not



and your



for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. * * * Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the



his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have forsake his way, and the unrighteous



upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ISA, 55.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou dost beset us behind and before by Thy grace and love. On all sides are the voices of blessing and warning calling us to Thyself and Thy service. Open our ears and hearts that we may hear, heed, and live. May Thy book, Thy day, Thy house, Thy people, and all Thy providences invite and constrain many to accept Thy love and life. For Christ's sake, Amen.

And when Christ calls He also draws
To truth Divine and higher laws,
"Come!" to the river says the sea:
"Come," steel to magnet cries, "to me!"
"Come!" to field and forest calls the Spring,
When from winter sleep awakening.
As runs the river to the sea;
As steel the magnet draws we see;
As earth's charmed atoms to Spring's call;
So the soul to the wondrous Saviour's thrall.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, Isaiah prophesied, B. C. 759-698. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Isaiah, the Jewish people, and needy everywhere.

Scripture Setting: Gospel Calls. A call from God, Hosea 14. A call to all, Prov. 8:1-17. A call from Christ, Matt. 11:20-30. A worthy call, Heb. 2:1-15. A desirable call, 1 Pet. 1:13-25. An urgent call, Rev. 22:7-17. A call to repentance, Matt. 3:1-12. A call today, Heb. 3:7-19.

Life and Conduct Setting. The whole chapter is

an attractive picture of the great salvation. We see it to be (1) A salvation for all, vs. 1; (2) A salvation that satisfies the soul's craving, vs. 1, 2; (3) A salvation assured by Divine covenant, vs. 3, 4; (4) A salvation in Divine purpose and power, vs. 5; (5) A salvation which can be received by faith and repentance, vs. 6, 7; (6) A salvation that is abundant, vs. 8-10; (7) A salvation that gives increasing and abiding joy.

"Love's redeeming work is done; Come and welcome, sinner, come."

GOD'S COURIERS OF SALVATION.

The Courier of Blessing. "Well, how shall we find the way?" The question was an anxious one, with almost a note of despair in it. "Oh, you will have no trouble at all. Just watch the guideposts at the crossroads, and go as they direct." How many, many travelers have reached the desired place, by following this simple rule. Do you know that God has given, and is giving, full directions as to how we can reach salvation and Heaven? He has placed guideposts at all the cross-roads of life, and anyone who wishes can easily find the way to Him and to His Heaven. Too often the travelers are too careless, or too self-willed to watch and read these directions on these guideposts. They prefer to go their own way. So God has sent out couriers of salvation, persons, providences, and even things to call to men, arrest their attention, and entreat them to turn from the wrong way and travel in the right way. In all these ways God is saying, "Ho! Ho! This is the way." One of the most common of these is the courier of blessing. The figures of water, wine, milk, bread, suggest the variety and importance of these blessings. Every one of them is a voice from God, saying, "Ho! everyone, Come." If we should oftener count our blessings we would oftener go the way God calls us.

You Are That Traveler. A traveler is out upon a journey across a wide waste of desert. Days have passed by, and he is out of both water and food. Much of the journey lies yet before him. The parching sun is overhead and burning sands beneath his feet. At night he finds no place of lodgment but in the desert. He is thirsty, fainting, losing hope. All of a sudden there runs some kind friend to his rescue, with all needed supplies, and

all given in great abundance free. Will he accept them? He surely will. You are that traveler. You are on the way to eternity. Unless you are succored you will die, for you are empty-handed. Jesus runs to meet you with all the riches of His grace. Will you eat and live? I hope you will.

The Courier of Warning. The great storm has swept away the railway bridge, and the train is soon due on that track. The station agent sends out a courier to flash a warning signal to the engineer of the train. The engineer does not need to be urged to heed it, but stops at once and so saves his life and his train. "Wherefore do ye?" How good, kind and gentle God is in this warning! "Why will ye die?" "Ho! come this way;" "hearken to me." There is danger ahead, and the things that attract and allure can never satisfy. God knows this and sends His warning couriers to urge man to the right way. "Enter ye in at the straight gate." "Unto you, O men I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." The courier of blessing offers all needed good for this life, even a hundred fold; and the courier of warning would lead the traveler to escape death, and find "in the world to come life everlasting." By hearing and heeding we can save the whole life train, and be helpful in warning and saving others. Watch for the courier of warning and be sure to listen to him. It may be just a whisper to your own conscience.

Blessed, and a Blessing. A Christian workingman in Birmingham, England, has been laboring for some months trying to get some of his sinbruised brothers back home to God. At last he came to his minister with face radiant with joy. "I've got him," he said, in his homely, colloquial, familiar way, "got him after eighty visits." Night after night, for eighty nights, he went out for a single man, catching him before the drink could get hold of him. He prepared the way of the Courier of Pardon and Forgiveness. the Lord for that man.

The Christian should be a courier that cries aloud his God-given message. Help us all to be advance agents for Christ the King. Forbid that we should do aught but advertise him. Whether men hear or forbear, may we ring true to our mission and message. May we not grow weary in the work.

The Courier of Divine Love and Guidance. What does that mean? It means that God Himself has come down "to seek and to save the lost." Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, and He is not content until every sheep and lamb is safe in the fold. He seeks, and seeks, he knocks and knocks, he waits and waits. This story says to "seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near." All men are away from God, and opposing Him even as pictured out by the last pictures of the wicked person and the unsaved man. But notice that picture of mercy, running up into and between the pictures of the wicked and the man. mercy and love of Jesus Christ are doing this constantly. Paul told the wicked Athenians that they even lived and moved in God, and that He was all about them; and that "they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.' This courier of Divine love comes to every human heart and says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." And we should open to this Christ courier at once. I wonder why all do not, for He is "altogether lovely" and "the chiefest among ten thousand." Oh. I see why. There is another courier, always following the love courier. It is the hate courier; he hates Jesus Christ, and hates love, and hates the soul, and is trying hard to deceive it and destroy it. This hate courier is Satan, and he says "wait a little, wait just one day, until you do this or that." He knows that if he can keep the soul from the love courier this one day, he can more easily keep it the next day, and the next. Isn't he cunning? As cunning as he is mean and bad. The only way to beat him is to obey the love courier at once, who says, "Follow Me." This love courier says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Whosoever Will May Come. The wretched woman of the town resolved to go back home and live a better life. One wild night she reached her father's house and knocked. She heard steps and voices within, but the door remained bolted. Presently the voices ceased, the steps receded, the light moved up the stairway. Penitent though she was, her home was closed against her. Not so with our Heavenly Father; rather, He calls unto all to come.

The Courier of Pardon and Forgiveness. We have known that all these couriers come to lead us to the wonderful peace of God. We know, too, that we came into the land of peace and joy only through the gateway of pardon and forgiveness. All of God's couriers of salvation are shouting "grace, grace;" and "life, life." These are just the words sinful man needs to hear, for he knows that he is unworthy, and that he is dead and helpless. But this courier cries that "He will abundantly pardon." So we may be sure that even the hidden sin will be pardoned, and that even the sinful nature will be changed and made pure, for "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Chapter 53 is the "It is finished" chapter; chapter 54 is the "I will do it" chapter; and chapter 55 is the "abundant pardon" chapter. The avenger of blood is after every member of the human family, because everyone belongs to a sinful race, and every one has actually sinned. This pardon courier comes crying forgiveness if we will only flee to the haven of refuge, which is Jesus Christ. With all these couriers meeting us constantly in life's highways how easy it is to be saved! All we need to do is to let ourselves be guided to safety and blessedness. Listen any time, and you can hear the courier crying, "Ho every one! This is the way."

Full and Free Pardon. "Abundantly pardon" means abundant love, abundant ways and means, forgiving abundant sins, abundant fulness of grace and life, abundant blessings and joy.—A. C. M.

"God calling yet, I cannot stay; My heart I yield without delay."

Quiz and Study. 1. Who was the first herald or courier of Jesus Christ? 2. Name some other persons or things that call people to Christ. 3. Name some Scripture characters who heard and obeyed the call. 4. Name some who heard and rejected the call.

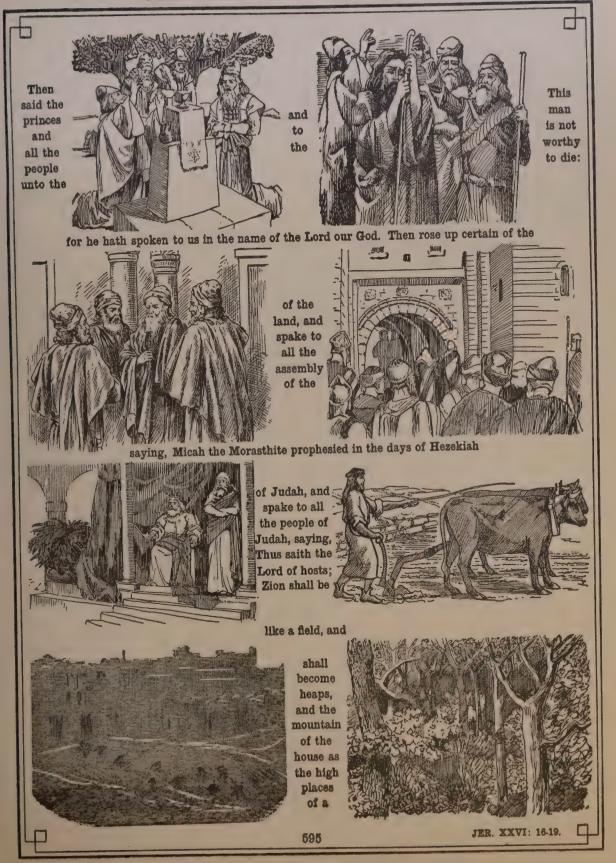
Challenge Text. "Lo, all these -- worketh God — with man to — back his — from the pit." Job 33:(1).

Practical Thoughts. 1. Every need and sin is a cry for a Saviour and is a proof there is a Saviour.

2. Man will toil and sacrifice for worldly good, and will not accept a free salvation. 3. This chapter tells us the what, when, why, and how, of salvation. 4. The best things are the freest, be-cause we are not able to buy them, or create them. 5. Yet God graciously accepts our faith and love as a sort of purchase money. 6. God's promise of grace is even more certain than the laws of nature. 7. God gives strength and guidance to every one who desires to find Him. 8. There is a time coming when it will be too late to seek God and salvation.

Dr. J. M. Coon.

JEREMIAH TRIED AND ACQUITTED



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS JEREMIAH 26.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and therefore we are destined to triumph over all sin and all enemies. Even life's severest trials are made to minister to our higher good. Keep us humble, patient, reverent, faithful, watchful, that we may enter into the victory Thou art planning for us. For Christ's sake, Amen. Give thy day to duty!
To that high thought be given Thine every hour. So shall the bending heaven As from the root the flower Bring to thy glad soul beauty. -Richard Watson Gilder.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Time, About B. C. 608. Historical Setting: Place, Jerusalem, at the temple. Persons, Jere-

miah, priests, prophets, princes, people.

Scripture Setting: God Guiding and Girding.

Helping the discouraged, 1 Kings 19:9-18. Inspiring trust, Psa. 43:1-5. Revealing His grace, 2

Cor. 12:1-10. The love of Christ, 2 Cor. 5:14-19. Supplying all our need, Phil. 4. All things for good, Rom. 8:28-39. Under His shadow, Psa. 91. God's shepherd care, Psa. 23.

Life and Conduct Setting. This trial and ac-

quittal of Jeremiah furnishes a good illustration

of God's care of His work and workers. 1. He gives boldness for the proclamation of His will and purpose, vs. 7, 8. 2. He sustains and inspires amid greatest opposition, vs. 9-11. 3. He gives special grace and heroism that His servant may reaffirm the message, vs. 12, 13. 4. He inspires His workers with marvelous faith and dauntless courage vs. 14, 15. 5. He reignes has a least courage. less courage, vs. 14, 15. 5. He raises up able advocates and defenders, vs. 16, 17. 6. He vindicates his workers by and with God's Word, vs. 18. 7. He protects and preserves them for other work He has for them to do, v. 19.

FIGHTING ALONE AND WINNING.

Standing Alone for God. Did you ever attend a trial at court? The court room was nearly full when you got there. You have just taken your seat, and the order is given, "Bring in the prisoner." Soon the man on trial is brought in. All eyes are turned towards him as he is led to the seat reserved for him. Then you hear whispers on every side, for many people judge a case almost at once. Some say one thing and some another. The judgment may be because of his looks or acts or walk. Then the real trial begins before judge and jury. Let us take a look at this man who is on trial in our story. He is meek and mild in appearance, and really looks as if he were a good man. His name is Jeremiah, which means "The Lord layeth the foundation." I think we shall find some traits of character which are like great stones in the foundation of a building. He does not seem frightened at all, and he has said, "as for me, behold, I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you." That looks as if he thought something else was more important than even his life. This is the case, for he has told them what God ordered him to speak. He knows God's message is true, and he is willing to stake his life on it. He seems entirely alone standing there for God and His truth. He was called the "weeping prophet" for he was so tender and pleading in his efforts to make his people better. But every feature of his face has an edge of firmness now and his eyes flash a quiet courage. It makes one think of Daniel when he was tried; or of Peter and John when they were tried; or of Christ Himself before Pilate. The mere fact of being gentle and kind does not prevent one from being

firm and strong. They are often the people who can be firmest and strongest.

Who Is the Brave Boy? There is a great difference between a bold man and a brave man. A bold man may be a coward at heart, a brave man is never a coward. A brave man may be timid, and hesitating, and cautious, but he is not a coward. When the Emperor asked for a volunteer on a difficult and dangerous mission there were many who ran and asked to be sent; they were seeking favor with the Emperor. But he chose one man who had said very little, whose face blanched at the thought of the errand, but who said quietly, "I will go." The Emperor saw that here was a brave man, not necessarily bold and daring. He measured the cost, took his life in his hand, and went out to meet the danger .- Ex-

Strange Accusers. Look about the court room now and see those who have accused Jeremiah. They are priests, and prophets as pictured out in the first pictures. But Jeremiah also was a prophet. These then must be false prophets and false priests. They are jealous of Jeremiah, and would like to have him put to death. They even said that he was worthy of death, and many people sided with them. These false prophets and priests had great influence, because the false gods vere worshiped by many of the people. Jeremiah prophesied that God would visit judgment on the nation and city for their wickedness. Then it is said that they brought him to the city gate for trial. That was the court room of those days. It is a great study to contrast the face of Jeremiah with the faces of these prophets and priests. With bad hearts they could not help having bad faces. They are filled with envy, jealousy and hate, and they show it. He is like a lamb among wolves or like an angel among devils. It looks as if people and all are against him.

But let us see what happens next. The hate of the wicked may be one's best commendation.

A Good Recommendation. "Have you any recommendations?" was asked of the boy who applied for a position. "No, sir." "Why not?" The lad's lips trembled. "I—was—discharged," came at last in a faint voice. "My lad, why were you discharged?" the employer asked tenderly. "Because I would not work on the Lord's day,"

came back the reply, steadily and bravely.
"Yes, I do want a boy," Mr. Lansing said, as he placed his hand on the petitioner's head. "I believe you are just the boy who will suit me. Come here at this hour tomorrow morning."

An Unseen Power at Work. All seemed to be against Jeremiah at first. But now the princes and some of the people are in his favor. They were influenced by the character and work of Jeremiah, but greater than all, and back of all, was the power of God caring for His prophet. So these princes say that Jeremiah is not worthy to die. The elders also and the people join in the plea that he is innocent, and a strong argument is presented. We will look at that soon, but just now it is well for us to remember that God keeps watch of His own servants and of His own people. Even when He must afflict them, as here, yet He does that for their good and saves them in it. Sometimes God works through others as He does through these princes. Sometimes he comes Himself, and walks with His afflicted servants, as He did with the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. Sometimes he sends His angel, as He did to Peter in prison. God has many ways of comforting and helping those who love and trust Him. In the first chapter of this story we saw Jeremiah standing alone for God. But here we see he is standing with God, and also with many others whom God has influenced. You remember that God said once to Elijah when he thought he was the only true worshiper left, that He had seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal. God has His forces everywhere and of all kinds, and can do whatever He sees to be best for His people and His cause.

All Things Work Together for Good. Life is a flying shuttle. But the pattern grows, the web is wrought. It takes both dark threads and golden to work out God's design. You cannot judge the purpose of the Weaver by the thrust of one shuttle or the weave of one thread, whether it be dark or bright. "All things work together for good to them that love God." We are yet on the loom. The shuttles are not yet empty. Give God time to put this and that, dark threads and bright, together, and complete the purpose of His providence. With every new day let us think less of our present desire and more concerning the Divine Weaver's design.—G. B. F. Hallock.

Learning from History. What great les-

sons we learn from history! Bunker Hill and Washington's monument and the Declaration of Independence mean very much to us all. So other nations have their glorious past for their guidance and inspiration. Every person, too, is better and stronger for all the splendid and heroic deeds of his ancestors.

"Deeds of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime."

Here it was specially a lesson of warning, and also of example. A prophet had sent a message much like this of Jeremiah. Hezekiah, who was king at that time, heeded the warning and repented, and so saved himself and the nation. The last picture shows in a striking way, that God is able to fulfill his threats of judgment. A city may be like Jerusalem for glory and strength and yet God can make it to be "plowed like a field," and even the great temple itself may become "as the high places of a forest." The great lesson is that man cannot fight against God successfully, and that it is far better to heed His warnings, and thus receive His blessings. To make sure that Jeremiah should not be put to death. God sent a man by the name of Ahikam to be with him and keep him from harm, and so he was not only acquitted, but kept and guarded.

The Lesson We All Need to Learn. "But is a man to do nothing for Christ that he does not like to do? God pity him, if not. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to 'go,' and we go. Love constrains us." Look anywhere, look everywhere, and you will see this same thing. People doing what they ought to do. Not what they want to do. It is the lesson of all history that is worth reading. Duty is duty. Duty's commands ought always be obeyed. Self-denial, service, duty, was Christ's teaching and Christ's example. And that is the way to Christ's crown for you, for me. We must suffer with him if we would reign with him.—Exchange.

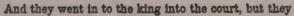
Quiz and Study. 1. What great apostle was tried and acquitted? 2. What greater person was tried and condemned though innocent? 3. Whose face looked like that of an angel when he was tried and stoned? What caused that look? 4. When did an invisible hand write sentence of judgment on the wall? 5. To what class of prophets does Jeremiah belong?

prophets does Jeremiah belong?

Challenge Text. "The Lord is my ——— and my ———; whom shall I fear?" Psa. 27: (?).

Practical Thoughts. 1. The brave man makes friends, and also enemies. 2. It is foolish to cry peace and safety when there are perils and enemies. 3. Obedience to God will secure protection from wicked men. 4. He who is faithful to God can defy the power of man. 5. Every life has its times when God interposes and delivers; watch for them. 6. The believer is protected by God, and therefore he should be consecrated to God. 7. The Christian life is a warfare, and it takes courage to live it.

JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE ROLL





in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. So the king sent Jehudi



and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi



in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes

which stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the



burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves. he



with the pen knife. and



that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither theking, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

JER. XXXVI: 20-24.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS JEREMIAH 36.

Prayer: O Lord, Teach me to receive in humility Thy warnings against sin even when they are disagreeable to my nature. In Christ's name. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 607. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Jehoiakim the king of Judah. Jeremiah the prophet, Baruch the scribe, Michaiah and Jehudi.

Scripture Setting: Rejecting the Truth of God. Jehoiakim pays tribute; his city is taken, 2 Kings 23:35; also chapter 24. Jesus reads in the synagogue and is rejected, Luke 4:16. A day of atonement proclaimed, Lev. 23:27. A good king gives heed to the law, 2 Kings 22:12-14; 2 Chron. 34:18-20. An awakened conscience, Acts 24:25. Command to

Though the cause of evil prosper yet 'tis Truth

And albeit she wander outcast, now I see around

Troups of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her

alone is strong,

from all wrong.

her throng

speak God's words, Ezekiel 2:7. Life and Conduct Setting. 1. A good man does his duty even when it involves peril to himself. 2. The Lord gives all a chance to repent and reform. 3. The blessing of the written Word. "(1) It is present for everyone. (2) It is present at every time and place. (3) It is present in all its parts."

4. "The guilt of indifference to the Divine warnings. It involves (1) Contempt of God. (2) Unbelief. (3) Extreme hardness of heart."

THE PROPHECY. THE BURNING OF

It was in the great city of Jerusalem, where were the temple, the king's palaces and many other beautiful buildings. king, Jehoiakim, lived in luxury and hosts of people did whatever he commanded. Though he held his throne subject to tribute to Egypt, yet he was in his own land ruler over all. He was not a good ruler, either, but a very bad one, self-willed, tyrannical and ill-natured to every one around him.

An Unwise King. Few people would have ventured to tell him anything unpleasant, even when it was for his good or that of the country. Like most people, especially such as are used to having their own way, the king did not enjoy disagreeable truths. Jehoiakim preferred to have near him men who told him he was a great king, that his land was not only prosperous but always would be so. He liked such as told him that other nations were afraid of him and that they would never venture to attack him. But sometimes the only way to save people and to save a country is to get them to realize that certain things are wrong and must be changed.

Jehoiakim and his country were then in danger, but he did not wish to think about that. Most nations then were ready to fight any other nations when they had power to do so. At that time Egypt and Babylonia were the most powerful countries, and, as has been stated, Jehoiakim paid tribute to Egypt. But far away to the eastward were the Babylonians, who were growing rapidly stronger and making war upon many weaker peoples.

The Prophet. At that time a good man lived in Judah called Jeremiah, who was a prophet. God enabled him to foresee many things and authorized him to tell about these | miah should hide themselves, for they knew

coming events, that all might prepare for the evil or reform and be saved. It was made plain to Jeremiah that unless Jehoiakim changed his ways, obeyed God, looked after the defences of his country, and performed his duties as a good king should do, the Babylonians would come and destroy him.

Jeremiah had been accustomed to address the people and rulers at the temple and to tell them whatever God inspired him to utter. Many of his prophecies, which foretold peril unless they did better, had given offence and he had been forbidden to speak any more. So he called to him a man named Baruch, a ready writer, and to him Jeremiah dictated his prophecies. Baruch wrote them down upon pieces of parchment, which were then fastened together end to end, and made into a roll. Jeremiah then bade Baruch take the roll, go to the temple and read it to the people on a great fast day. As at that time many people were gathered for the fast from all the cities of Judah. multitudes heard the prophecies read.

Warnings. In these prophecies the nation was told that great peril was coming from the Babylonians and that unless they ceased to do evil king and people would be taken and carried into captivity. Such foretellings of evil could not but make an impression upon many people. Among others who heard the warnings was Michaiah, who, being greatly stirred up, went to the king's house and told the princes there of the dreadful prophecies. The princes commanded Jehudi, a page of the king, to go and get the book and bring Baruch to read to them. This was done.

The princes were startled by the words, and they warned Baruch that he and Jerethe king would be angry. They kept the book and laid it away in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and went and told the king.

The king then ordered Jehudi to bring the book and read it to him. So Jehudi read to the king and the princes the prophecies of Jeremiah. Or rather, he began to do so, for he was not allowed to finish, as you can see

by the picture.

Foolish Anger. Jehoiakim had heard from others something of the nature of the prophecies. He also knew the character of Jeremiah, that he was a man who would fearlessly declare the truth. So he was ready to be angry before Jehudi began to read. When he heard from the book some of the severe things that the Lord had declared by the mouth of Jeremiah he grew more and more angry.

The king was seated in his winter palace,

and there was a fire on the hearth.

When Jehudi had read three or four leaves, the king took a knife, and frowning angrily, cut the roll with it. Certain of those who looked on cried out and tried to restrain him. But he raged all the more and declared he would not leave a fragment of the roll. So with his own hands he cast the roll piece by piece into the flames on the hearth. It was soon reduced to ashes.

Having destroyed the roll, Jehoiakim felt more comfortable. The evil foretellings would annoy him no more, as he thought, and the prophet was forbidden to speak again at the temple. He fancied all would

be well.

A returned missionary once related that he had been talking with an intelligent Chinaman in regard to the Bible, and had assured him it was very ancient. He gave him a copy of the Book. A few days later the Chinaman came to him with a look of reproach, and pointing to the first chapter of Romans, said, "You told me your Book was old, but that chapter you have written yourself since you came here and learned all about Chinamen."
So the Bible reveals the heart to itself whether

it is good or evil. And the sinner oftentimes hates

it because it exposes him to himself.

The Prophecies Restored. But although he had burned the only written copy of the prophecies he did not succeed in accomplishing what he wished. For Jeremiah was bidden by the Lord to dictate the prophecies again.

More than that The prophecies came The Babylonians came in due time against Judah. And the king was not ready

to meet them.

We are to remember always that the truth cannot be destroyed. Many people have tried to destroy the truth. In the olden times many of the prophets were put to death by men who fancied that if they killed the prophets they would at the same time make their words of no effect. But their teachings lived on after their bodies were dust and ashes. The early Christians were persecuted by Jews and Romans. Multitudes of them were thrown to lions, burned at the stake, crucified, beheaded, but the truth for which they died lives on. We should believe the truth and know that God will take care of it.

Voltaire declared he would destroy the Bible, so that it would not outlast the age in which he lived, the Eighteenth Century. Yet the Nineteenth Century saw it translated into all the languages upon the earth and distributed in countless copies.

The Undying Word. As King Jehoiakim was blind to the fact that he could not destroy the truth, so all sinners are blind to the consequences of their wrong ways. They do not wish to think that while others suffer for their sins they themselves will do so. They fancy they can escape; that they will not be found out and punished. They do not wish to see, and so they shut their

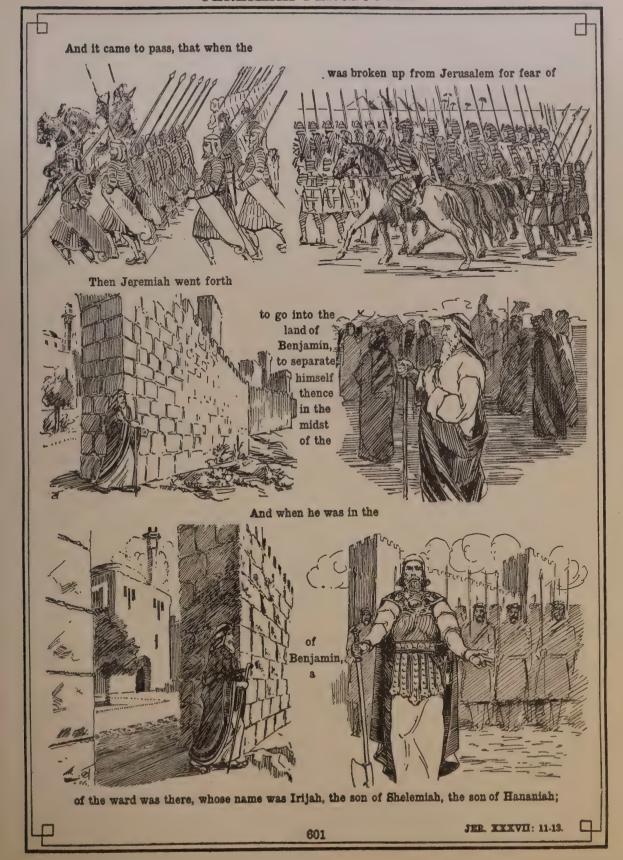
The Bible has been attacked by unbelievers and foes in every age. On several notable occasions its foes have collected all the copies of it they could find and have burned them publicly. Yet it lives on and guides count-

less thousands into the way of life.

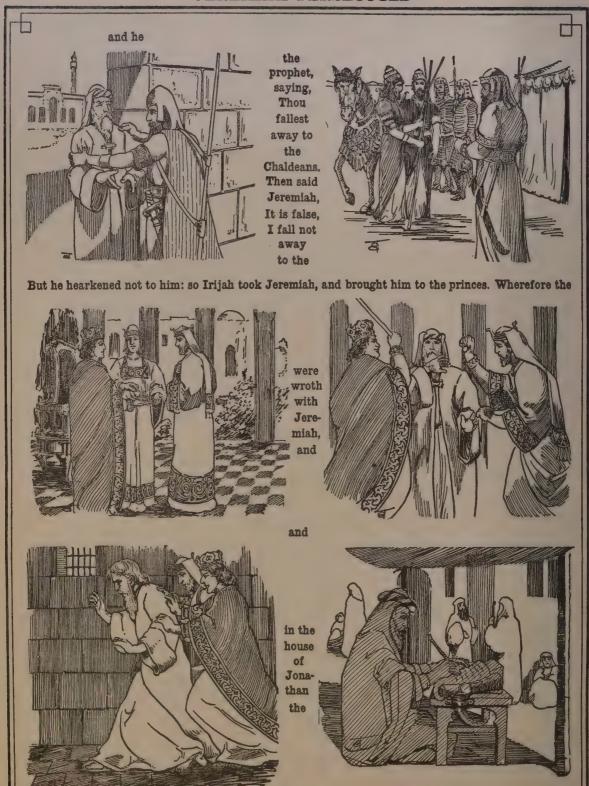
A few years ago a young American, on an exploring expedition to Labrador, became too ill to travel onward with his companions and had to be left behind, while they pushed on to find food and help. When they returned, he had passed away. Beside him lay his diary and a Bible open at the fourteenth chapter of John. In his diary he told that this chapter had comforted him inexpressibly. So the Word of God not only rebukes sin, but it is the greatest means of joy and consolation when all else fails. No circumstances are so desolate but that the Bible can bring Divine strength and comfort to the sufferers.

Practical Truths. 1. It is useless to fall into a rage because unpleasant truth is given to us. should welcome the warnings and then do that which is right and avoid the evil which is fore-told. 2. To refuse to listen to truth does not help matters. 3. An obedient child is better and wiser than a disobedient and bad king. 4. Every one of us who does right, who turns from sin, in so far, helps to save our country from its perils. 5. Jehoiakim brought his country into distress by rejecting the Word of God; he could have saved it by obedience. As we love our land, we must remember we can strengthen it against its enemies by loyalty to the truth, by righteous lives and by making the Word of God known to others.

Dr. C. D. WILSON.



JEREMIAH PERSECUTED



for they had made that the prison.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS JEREMIAH 37.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, In Thy plan for our earthly life Thou dost make a place for even the hard things. Every burden has its wings; every trial has its compensations and inspirations; every dark hour has its glorious and shining messages from the Infinite. May our souls be alert to hear Thy voice and behold Thy beauty and grace. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Behold, we live through all things—famine, thirst,
Bereavement, pain; all grief and misery,
All woe and sorrow; life inflicts its worst
On soul and body,—but we can not die
Though we be sick, and tired, and faint, and
worn,—

picture of an ideal worker in varied life relations:

providences lead the way (vs. 5-7). 3. He is brave and faithful to deliver the Divine message (vs.

8-10). 4. He seeks to save life and help the cause of his Lord (vs. 11-13). 5. He submits to persecution, but remembers his office and the claims of his

Master (vs. 14-16). 6. He is wise and prudent in and for the truth (vs. 17-19). 7. He fights valiantly for life, but is ready for death, rather than disobey

He is instant and constant in service (v. 4). He is ready for God's new word and work, as

-Elizabeth Akers.

Lo, all things can be borne!

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

God (vs. 20, 21).

Historical Setting: Time, About B. C. 589. Place, Jerusalem. Persons, Jeremiah, Irijah, Zedekiah the king and the princes.

Scripture Setting: Girded for the Life Battles. By right motives, 2 Cor. 5:14-19. By a right spirit, Psa. 40:10-17. By a right aim, 2 Tim. 4:1-8. By consecration, 2 Cor. 8:8-24. By right conduct, Prov. 3:5-18. By seizing opportunities, Eph. 5:15-21. By a heroic faith, Heb. 11:32-40. By deathless devotion, Rev. 2:8-11.

Life and Conduct Setting: The passage gives a

WAYS A GOOD MAN MAY BE HINDERED.

Getting Lost in the Crowd. In an army or any large company of men, a man could drop out and the lack would scarcely be noticed. Also, one might be lost because the army prevented him from doing what he might or ought to do. In this latter way, Jeremiah came near being lost and so hindered in his work. Sometimes in a Sunday school class, or young people's society, one member may be lost because there are many others, or because some one of them may think that he or she can not do much, or will not be missed. Jeremiah was not that kind of a man. He intended to count one wherever he could. These armies had not altogether prevented him, but they had hindered some. The army of the Chaldeans left off fighting Jerusalem because the army of Pharaoh came. Really it was God driving away the Chaldeans to test and try His people. God had said that the Chaldeans should burn the city with fire. Jeremiah trusted that the Lord would take care of him; but he knew, too, that he must do his part. So as soon as the army left he hurried out to go to his native town to get supplies. His farm, or estate, was there and he went to collect his portion so as to be prepared against famine. Jeremiah believed in trusting as if all depended on God and then planning and working as if all depended on himself. He did not purpose to get lost in the army nor because of it.

Men Who Counted for Something. History bristles with instances of men that felt it their duty to speak the truth that was in them; men who through their speech altered the course of the world. In Old Testament times there were Elijah, Jeremiah, and Amos, who thundered against the other proph-

ets; in New Testament times there were John the Baptist, Peter, John, Paul, Christ Himself. At the dawn of the modern era we have Luther, who faced the power of the Roman Catholic Church and spoke the truth that he saw. Almost in our own day we have men like Wendell Phillips, Whittier, Beecher, and William Lloyd Garrison and the great Lincoln taking a determined stand against slavery and crying aloud until their voices were heard. 'I am in earnest,' writes Garrison; 'I will not equivocate, I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard.'—R. P. Anderson.

Arrested and Accused Again. In our last story Jeremiah was arrested, tried and acquitted. Now he is caught again. Some think this was spite work by this man Irijah, for it is thought that Jeremiah had predicted the death of Hananiah who was Irijah's grandfather. Anyhow, a man sent of God like Jeremiah will make enemies because of his exposing the sins of the people. Some such thing probably made this guard charge Jeremiah with being a deserter to the Chaldeans. This made Jeremiah's blood boil, if he was mild and gentle. He replied to this hase insult as quick as an echo, by saying, "It is false; I am not a deserter to the Chaldeans."

But this man had the star of authority on his uniform, and he blustered around and marched Jeremiah off to the princes, who were the leaders, and who also were Jeremiah's enemies. So this seemed to be a more serious hindrance to the plans and work of the prophet, besides putting his life in danger. Jeremiah had not sneaked away in the night, but had gone "in the midst of the people"; that is, with many others who were going on similar errands. This was a mean official trick to hinder and annoy a good man

in a good work. But Jeremiah was ready to be arrested ten times or a hundred times just so he was doing his duty.

A Poor Brand of Princes. When Jeremiah was hurried away to the princes it should have meant his quick release. But these persons were even worse than Irijah. He might be execused for arresting Jeremiah on mere suspicion; but the princes should have heard his explanation and defense. Instead of that they judged him unheard and beat him and thrust him into prison. Princes, indeed! They were such only by name and dress. At heart they were full of hate because Jeremiah was good, and had told them the truth. These were not the princes who had been friendly to Jeremiah on two previous occasions. They had the same office, but were entirely unworthy to fill it. Sometimes such a thing happens in our day. We have known of aldermen, mayors and governors who were unworthy to fill those high and responsible offices. The office was honorable, but the officer was disgraceful. Good people are at fault if they do not put out the bad officers and elect good ones.

The pictures show these princes in their uniforms and they look as if they were good men; but the conduct is the test and measure of the real man. By their conduct they show that they are cruel, prejudiced and revengeful. Jeremiah is the real prince here, and he carries himself with dignity and is patient under the unjust treatment. He works, or suffers, as the case may be, and trusts that God will make it all count for

His cause and glory.

What's This Stone For? A gentleman who was walking near an unoccupied building one day saw a stone-cutter chiseling patiently at a block of stone in front of him. "Still chiseling?" he remarked, pleasantly. "Yes, still chiseling," replied the workman, going on with his work. "In what part of the building does this stone belong?" asked the gentleman. "I don't know," replied the stone-cutter; "I haven't seen the plans." Then he went on chiseling. Now, that is what we should do. We have not seen the great plans of the Master Architect, but each of us has his work to do, and we should chisel away until it is done.

The Prison Becomes a Gateway of Safety. This "prison" was probably an underground cell, where public offenders were held. Into this Jeremiah goes, the two false princes rudely pushing him as the picture shows. These cells were under the house of Jonathan, the scribe, who is shown in the last picture, writing off the law. Sometimes there would be twenty, or more, such cisternlike cells for imprisoning people. This Jonathan may not have been a bad man him-

self. He has a very good name and we may hope that he was true to it, and also true to the great friend of David by that name.

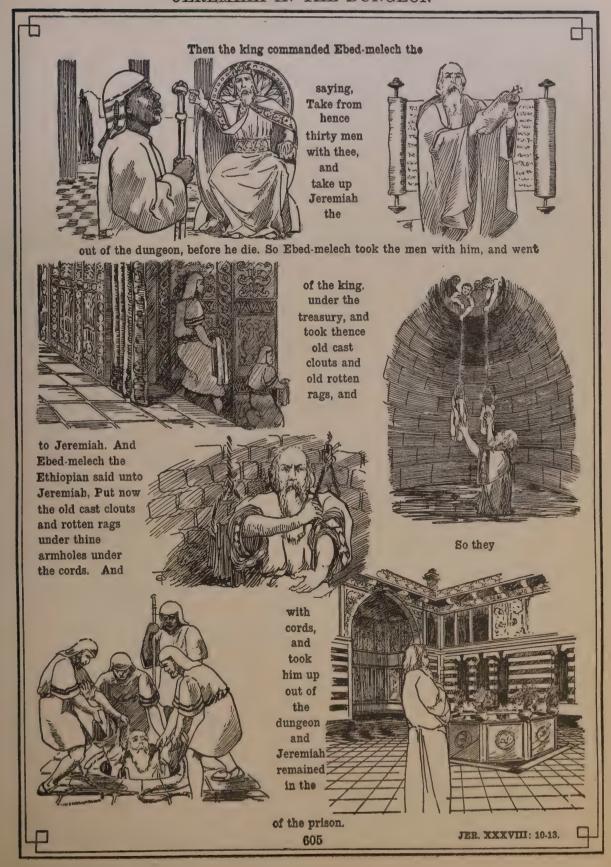
We know that David's friend Jonathan would not do a mean or unjust act. Sometimes those scribes just wrote in a kind of business-like way, without thinking much of what they wrote. Would it not be odd, and even worse, if he should be writing some command about love or forgiveness, or kindness; and yet have one or more persons imprisoned unjustly right under where he was sitting? But how is this prison a gateway to safety? Well, Jeremiah is kept from being killed, and later he asked the king to look into his case. The king did this, and removed him into "the court of the prison," and ordered them to feed him daily. The king also received from Jeremiah the messages of God to the people. The prison really was the first link in the chain of providences which protected Jeremiah, and finally released him. So he found out again that "all things work together for good."

Leave Results With God. Be patient. Keep sweet. Do not fret or worry. Do your best and leave results with God. Believe firmly in God, in the fulfillment of His purposes and in the march of His providences. God's laws are immutable, and work with undeviating regularity. Walk in fellowship with God, and every year you will be a stronger, better, happier and sweeter man. Do not mar your peace or power by needless worry. Live by faith in the Son of God, who loves you and gave Himself for you. On some bright tomorrow you will come to anchor under a haven of sapphire and in a harbor of calm, with chimes ringing their welcome from the spires that sentinel the city of God, while from the battlements millions will shout, "Well done!" while God Himself will say, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—George B. Vosburgh.

Quiz and Study. 1. Tell about Peter's imprisonment and deliverance; also that of Paul and Silas. 2. Tell of a Bible young man who had a dream in prison. 3. Recite, or read Christ's "blessed," which speaks of persecution (Matt. 5). 4. What famous book was written in an English prison? 5. Why are godly people often persecuted?

Challenge Text. "In the world ye shall have —; but be of good —, I have — the world." John 16:(?)

Practical Thoughts. 1. As Christ was "made perfect through suffering," so also the believer may expect it. 2. Persecution and trials equip one to be helpful and sympathetic. 3. Paul's joy in the Lord was greatest in his epistle of suffering. 4. Persecution brings out both the strength and beauty of the Christian character. 5. God is glorified and declared in and by the persecution of His people. 6. Even the gentle and timid may be made strong and fine to endure hardship. 7. If we give God first place He will give us best place. 8. The true believer is the greatest saving force in society and the nation.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS JEREMIAH 38:1-13.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thy saving power is great and Thy keeping power is also wonderful. Thine eye is ever on those who love and serve The: Thy hand is ever quick to help. Thou canst use the slave and the king to do Thy bidding.

Help us to see that we are always safe in doing Thy will, and that we are only safe and happy when obedient to Thee. For Christ's sake.

Let me but do my work from day to day, In field or forest, at the desk or loom, In roaring market place or tranquil room; Let me but find it in my heart to say, When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom; Of all who live, I am the one by whom This work can best be done in the right way." -Van Dyke.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, About B. C. 587. Place, Jerusalem. Fersons, Jeremiah, Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, Zedekiah the king, and the princes who cast Jeremiah into the dungeon.

Scripture Setting: The Believer in Prison. Joseph in prison, Gen. 41:9-14. Daniel in prison, Dan. 6:10-17. Peter in prison, Acts 12:1-10. Paul in prison, Acts 16:22-32. Promise of help, Isa. 43:1-7. Courage in prison, 2 Cor. 4:6-18. Confidence in God, Psa. 27. Praise for deliverance, Psa. 18:6-10.

Life and Conduct Setting: The experience of Jeremiah is a common one, though the form of imprisonment may vary greatly. In a study of persecution in general, we may note: 1. The be-

liever may expect persecution, if not in one way then in another, vs. 1. 2. The persecution will usually be according to one's fidelity and loyalty, vs. 2, 3. 3. Persecution is apt to be under the guise of the public good. The rascals persecuting are good at finding "reasons." 4. The powers that should protect are themselves wicked, or under the power of the wicked we 5. 6 God in in the power of the wicked, vs. 5, 6. 5. God is in full knowledge of it all to control or stop it, vs. 7-9. 6. Persecution is made to declare the glory of God, advance His cause in the earth, and develop and glorify those who suffer. 7. The true velop and glerify those who suffer. 7. The true attitude in persecution is patience in the trial, assurance of the Divine care and fellowship, and watchfulness for escape or service or both.

A PREACHER RESCUED FROM A PRISON.

A Trick of the Devil: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise." So said Luther when his enemies threatened, and his friends entreated. He would not swerve from the right, and so he was persecuted. Jeremiah is a good deal like Luther in his courage and convictions. As we sometimes say of a brave man, he had "the courage of his convictions." For this reason he was persecuted and imprisoned. This was not just the way his enemies put it. nor the way they would like to see it stated. The way they did put it was a trick of the devil. Satan is very shrewd and in his opposition to good people he tries to make his hatred look plausible. If he can't find any little slip in conduct, or weakness in the character, then he will manufacture something. He did so here, and influenced the princes to charge Jeremiah with being a traitor, because he had warned the people to flee to safety ere the king of Babylon would destroy the city. If any would flee to the Chaldeans they would be saved. They misrepresented Jeremiah's message, just as the Jews misrepresented Christ's words on several occasions. Notice how good Jeremiah looks in that second picture. The five times his face is seen in these pictures it is full of faith, peace, and purpose. He is always master of the situation, and he does not worry about what happens. We know too that he was much in prayer.

Courage and Conquest. A lad of seventeen had been sent to a saloon to take the measures for a

new counter. It was very cold, and he arrived with his teeth fairly chattering, for his coat was thin. The saloonkeeper mixed a hot drink, and pushed it The saloonkeeper mixed a hot drink, and pushed it over the counter to him. "It'll cost you nothing," he said; "drink it down, and you'll scon stop shivering, my boy." "He meant it kindly, too, and didn't think any harm," said the apprentice, as he told the story. "That's what made it harder to push it back, and say I didn't want it." "It must have been a big temptation," said a friend. "Well," replied the lad, frankly. "I'd rather have had it than some other kinds. You see, it takes two to make a successful temptation."—Exchange. Exchange.

Two Strange Helpers. They are shown in the first picture. One is a black man, an Ethiopian; but he seems to have had a white heart. He was a servant of the king, and had charge of the woman's department of the king's house. In this way he was with the king frequently, and he could see him when he wished. When he learned what had been done to Jeremiah, he was greatly stirred. He went straight to king Zedekiah and pleaded for the life of the prophet. He knew that Jeremiah would soon perish by starvation and exposure, if not taken from that filthy prison pit. The name of this black man was Ebed-melech, which means, "serv-ant of God." He certainly was true to his name in this act. It took courage also, for sometimes a king would order a slave killed for daring to make any request. He was rewarded for this act of kindness by being spared when Jerusalem was destroyed. That was even better than a Carnegie medal for heroism. But who is the other strange

helper? It is the king himself, giving that order to take thirty men and rescue Jeremiah. The strange thing about it is that he changed so quickly from an enemy to a friend. It was his weakness which led to Jeremiah's imprisonment. I think God must have breathed a little strength into him for this order.

How the Boys Helped a Cripple. "Here, boy, let me have a Sun." "Couldn't sell you no paper in this here block, mister, 'cause it belongs to Limpy. He's just up to de furder end now; you'll meet him."

"And who is Limpy, pray? And why does he have this special block?"

"Cause us kids agreed to let him have it. You see it's a good run 'count of the offices all along, and the poor chap is that lame he can't git around lively like the rest of us."

"Yes, I see. So you newsboys have a sort of

"'Well, we're going to look out for a little cove what's lame, anyhow."

"There comes Limpy now; he's a fortunate boy to have such kind friends."

The gentleman bought two papers of him and went on his way down town, wondering.

Lend a Hand Here. Did you ever see a lot of men working at something, when all had to work together? It might have been boatmen, or men in a shop, or on a building. The leader gives the signal, and then they all catch it up by their hearty "heave-ho. heave-ho." In this way they all act or pull together, and the work is soon done. These four men in the picture are thus working You see they had to, in order to together. pull Jeremiah up in comfort, or even to pull him up at all. Perhaps that one with the staff is giving the signals how to do it best. He is watching anxiously so that there shall be no blunder, or failure. The three who are grasping Jeremiah are bracing themselves to do their part. They are all busy, standing "shoulder to shoulder," and using their hands to help. How many times in life. at school, in play, at work of all kinds, much depends on all helping and helping together. Once four people brought a poor paralytic to Christ, and let him down through the roof. Christ healed the man, and He said it was because of the faith of all of them. It may take four of you, or even more, to bring that boy or girl to Sunday school or to the Young People's society. But it will pay, and the Master will see each worker and reward him. Don't be a shirker, or a jerker, or a kicker when there is a chance to do a good work with others.

How One Class Did It.. A hint as to a method that wins may be secured from this incident related by a member of a Bible class. To this member's

house came a workman, prepared to fix the telephone. When asked to join the Bible class, and handed a card of invitation, he said: "What kind of a bunch have you down there in that church of yours? I only came to town last Tuesday and already I have had five invitations to join the class. This is the sixth card that I have had given to me. Really I never saw a place where people looked after a fellow like this.' And they won their man .- Exchange.

The Power Behind. "Time and God work wonders," said the old minister to a young pastor who was troubled about his church. God works in His own time and way. So here, it is God working through men and through the instruments used. These old rags shown in the pictures, may have saved Jeremiah's life! they at least added much to his comfort, by keeping the cords from cutting into his flesh. Rags and cords and men and even the king all had their places and uses, but "the power behind" is what really helped and saved the prophet of God, and that power was God. You have heard the old soldier talk about "the man behind the gun," so we think of God working out His purposes by many providences,—selecting, adapting and directing men and all things for His glory and the good of His people. Back of the love of friend, of mother, of wife, is the love of God which inspires and sustains all the others.

God and the Daisy. "I wish I could be of some use," said a newly opened daisy which grew in a pleasant field; "but I am so small, I wonder why I was made." The little flower looked timidly around, and as a soft wind played over the field, waving the long grass it kissed the little daisy, and said: "God has made nothing in vain, only look up." As the trembling flower raised its head, a bright sunbeam glancing by dried the teardrop that dimmed its eye. The daisy felt grateful, and looked up with a mile. Takkange

that dimmed us eye. The daisy left grateril, and looked up with a smile.—Exchange.

Quiz and Study. 1. What Ethiopian eunuch is mentioned in the New Testament? 2. How was Daniel watched and imprisoned? 3. Where and when did Jesus say, "Gather up the fragments"? 4. Tell of four men who carried a paralytic to Christ. 5. How was Christ's word about the temple misinterpreted?

Challenge Text. "He brought me up also out of

onlineing the state of the miry —, and set my — upon a rock." Psa. 40:(†)

Practical Thoughts. 1. A prison may be an of God's servants is in reality an insult to the Almighty. 3. The motives of good people are sometimes misunderstood and misinterpreted. 4. "Those persecuted for righteousness' sake prove the reality of virtue, the value of religion, the truth of God's Word." 5. A little help is worth a great deal of pity. A tender heart makes a gentle hand." 6. Even the weak and lowly, when acting in the fear of God and under his direction, may have been conscienced of the great 7. awaken the consciences of the great. 7. V should never hesitate to stand for the right.

Dr. J. M. Com.

Son of man, I have made thee a



unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.
When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely



and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same



shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou



the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a



doth turn from
his righteousness,
and commit iniquity,
and I lay a
stumblingblock



he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS EZEK. 3:4-27.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Reveal to us Thyself and show us also Thy will. May we ever be on the outlook, watchful of all Thy providences. Help us to see the needs and sins of others so that we may warn and help and save. May we be true "watchmen" in word and life and constant influence. For Christ's sake, Amen.

"Thou must be true thyself. If thou the truth would'st teach; Thy soul must overflow if thou Another's soul would'st reach: It needs the overflow of heart To give the lips full speech."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 593. Places, Chebar and Tel-abib, in Babylonia. Persons, Ezekiel, angel spirit, Jews.

Scripture Setting: Duty of the Believer. Saved to serve, Eph. 2:1-10. Debtor to all, Rom. 1:8-15. Works to be judged, Eccl. 12:9-14. Responsible to God, Rom. 14:1-10. True to one's self, Job 2:1-13. Inspiration to duty, Isa, 61:1-11. Divinely appointed, Isa. 21:1-12. Fidelity imperative, Acts 20:17-35

Life and Conduct Setting: We see here a beautiful blending of privilege and duty in the Chris-

tian life and work. 1. The dutiful privilege to live in the best spiritual fellowship, vs. 12, 13. 2. To be guided and helped by the Holy Spirit, vs. 14, 15. 3. To receive orders and strength from God, vs. 16, 17. 4. Privilege and duty meet and kiss each other, vs. 18, 21. 5. Privilege and duty safeguarding and protecting each other, vs. 19. 6. Privilege and duty joining forces in saving the lost, vs. 21. 7. Privilege is the more important from the standpoint of the believer; duty is the more important from the standpoint of God. Which, then, is more important? Both; and again I say both.

OUR DUTY TO WARN AND HELP.

Who Is the Watchman? Did you ever stand on the busy street in a great city, and see the people passing and crossing? Who is that in the middle of the street dressed in a special uniform?

He keeps telling people what to do when they ask him. He is there also to watch and warn any who may be in danger. We call him a policeman, but he is a watchman for the city. Ezekiel was made a watchman to warn people against sin and its consequences. Ezekiel acted as such a watchman for many other nations besides Israel, as many as eight in all. That first picture shows a watchman, on the high wall looking out for any enemies that might come. There are many watchmen in life of different kinds. The preacher is a watchman, who warns all to flee from sin and Satan: and who warns them also when he sees Satan coming like a wolf or a lion, to hurt and destroy. Father and mother are watchmen, who guard the home from the evil persons and things that try to get in. Every one who knows the truth and is trying to please God, is a watchman over and for others, to protect and help them. Even a boy or a girl may sometimes do a service which will bring safety and blessing to many people. Such a boy or a girl is a watchman.

Two Kinds of Death. That man lying there in the second picture is dead; and the three people seem to be wondering what killed him. Perhaps someone failed to give the warning, and he was struck by a robber or a falling tree; or he might have been killed by a wild animal. All such kinds of death are what we call physical death: that is, the breath leaves the body, and one ceases | mean both the one who is warned and the

to act or think. The spirit has gone from the person, and then the body is buried in the

That third picture is very different from the second, but it shows the other kind of death. He looks strong and vigorous, as far as physical life is concerned; but he has no spiritual life. He is a wicked man, and Paul calls all such "dead in trespasses and sins." This is a very much worse kind of death than the mere death of the body. This is the death of the soul, and means a hard and bitter heart, hating God and all good men and things. If such a person dies in that state, the body is buried in the ground, but both soul and body are sent away from God and Heaven to dwell forever "with the devil and his angels." He was determined to work for Satan in this life, and he must dwell with him forever. Scripture calls this "the second death." We need to keep warning people to escape.

Awake, Thou That Sleepest. A railroad collision occurred. The telegraph operator confessed that he was asleep at his keyboard and that he is responsible.

It is a crime to sleep when sleeping jeopardizes human life. There are other positions of responsibility where the safety of the souls of men and women is involved—positions where sleep is as common in its practice as it is tragic in its results. Millions are being hurried on toward death and judgment, all heedless of their peril. How often the watchmen on the walls are fast asleep and fail to sound the alarm! How many churches and Christians are sleeping away the golden hours while the Christless multitudes sweep by to their doom! Awake! Awake!—Exchange.

The Warning That May Save Both.

one who warns. It is a great thing for one to warn another, and thus save a life; but this is a kind of watching and warning which saves both. This great truth is stated very clearly here: "If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." So it seems that our own salvation and blessedness are assured and increased by our fidelity. It is also shown that these blessings will be ours even though we fail to persuade others. God does not hold us responsible for what others do; but he does hold us responsible for what we do, and especially in the matter of warning the wicked. The reason the figure of a snake is used in that picture of warning is because the snake stands for sin. Sin and Satan are cunning and deceitful just like a snake; and so people need all the more to be warned against them. That man acts as if he had not seen the real danger before, as indeed he had not. The man who is warning him has now done his duty, and he is rewarded for the work, whether the wicked man turns or not. But quite likely the wicked man will turn when he sees the great danger. To one who is a preacher, or Sunday school teacher, or other worker, or who is a Christian at all, even a boy or a girl this is a great incentive to be faithful to all and at all times.

The Hiss of the Serpent of Sin. "Papa, pusy's very angry; she hissed at me just now. I can't get my ball." The child's plaintive persistence at last attracted the father's attention. Telling the lad to rise, he sent him for a couple of servants. They came to move the large old-fashioned bookcase in the corner of the room. It was the child of an India British official that uttered the cry, which proved to be a warning just in time. As the men moved the case they heard the hissing, which they understood full well. The space cleared displayed a cobra coiled up in the corner with its head raised, ready for instant attack. No time was lost in killing it, and so both the boy and others were saved.

The Neglect That May Hurt Both. This is seen in the last two pictures. The "wicked" man and the "righteous" man show the great difference in the face between those who do wrong and those who do right. It does not take long to decide which one you would rather be. The really beautiful face always comes from a good heart, redeemed by Christ and made new and pure by the Holy Spirit. This "seemingly righteous" man is one who has a good face and may come to have a good heart, and so be righteous in fact. He is like the good young man who came running once to Christ and claimed to obey all the commandments. Christ loved

him and warned him of his lack; but he made the very warning a "stumbling block," and he refused to come to Christ. God does not tempt anyone to sin and the only way in which it may be said, "I lay a stumbling block before him," is that God gives a warning and the man turns it into a stumbling block. Now, such a man "shall die in his sin . . . but his blood will I require at thine hand, because thou hast not given him warning." The neglect to warn hurts both. This truth is even more important, at least more solemn, than the other; for our failure brings injury and possible death, both to ourselves and others. The poet has put it this way, "Heaven's gate is closed to him who comes alone." Spurgeon was once asked what would become of the heathen if they did not hear of the gospel. He replied that it was a much more vital question as to what would become of us if we neglected to take the gospel to them.

Was It His Business? A wealthy man was asked to aid in a series of temperance meetings, but he refused, saying, "Gentlemen, it is not my business." A few days later his wife and two daughters were coming home on an express. In his fine carriage he rode to the station for his family. "Accident" was the cry that greeted him. He finds the accident has occurred twenty-five miles distant on the road on which his loved ones were returning, and was caused by the drunkenness of the engineer. It is his business now. In half an hour the train arrives. He hurries toward it, and finds the mangled and lifeless remains of his wife and one of his daughters. In another carriage lies his other daughter, with her body crushed and her life ebbing away. His neglect to help may have been partly to blame for the drunkenness which led to the death of his family.—Exchange.

Quiz. 1. To what class of prophets did Ezekiel belong? 2. Name three ways in which any Christian can be a watchman. 3. Name the other "major" prophets, and some of the "minor" prophets. 4. If one warned us of danger how should we feel towards him? 5. Who are God's watchmen now, to guard us from sin?

Challenge Text. "Now then we are _____ for Christ as though God did ____ you by us; we ____ to God." 2 Cor. 5: (1)

Practical Thoughts. 1. God has stationed many special watchmen to warn man against sin. 2. The more truth and blessing one has the greater is his responsibility. 3. Every Christian and every church has a duty to the lost everywhere. 4. Sin unrepented becomes man's curse and doom. 5. Any service God requires of us is by that fact made possible. 6. By warning and helping others we bring greatest blessing to ourselves. 7. He only is prepared to "go" and speak who has "come" and heard. 8. He who is "lifted up" by the Spirit's power will be able to declare the Spirit's message. 9. "Heaven's door is shut to him who comes alone."

Dr. J. M. COON.

THE NEW HEART

Then will I sprinkle clean



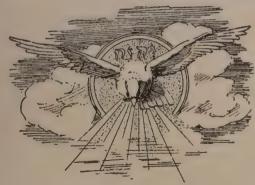
upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your



will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony



out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
And I will put my



within you, and cause you to



in mystatutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the



that I gave
to your
fathers;
and ye
shall be my



and I will be your God.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS EZEKIEL 36:25-38.

Prayer: Lord, We rejoice in Thy great power by which Thou canst change even the hard and wicked heart. By Thy Spirit and grace, and for the sake of Thy Son, Thou dost give the new heart to all who will accept it. Help us that we may feel our need and come to Thee for cleansing and life. Then may we have the power by which we may serve Thee and win others for Christ. For His sake, Amen.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 587. Ilace, In the Euphrates Valley. Persons, Ezekiel, Holy Spirit, people.

Scripture Setting: The New Heart. Need of a new heart, John 3:1-8. Proof of a new heart, Tit. 3:1-8. A heart of flesh, Ezek. 11:14-20. A heart to obey, Deut. 30:1-8. A heart toward God, Jer. 24:4-10. A spiritual heart, 1 Cor. 2:6-16. The heart's cry for God, Psa. 42. The heart's cry for holiness, Psa. 51.

Life and Conduct Setting: When God would "make all things new" in the human soul, he begins with the heart. If that citadel and center is brought into full and sweet submission all

WHAT IS IT TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

The New Nature. My friend and I were at an open air restaurant in Paris and directly in front of the famous Eiffel tower. This tower is nearly 1,000 feet high, and is one of the most beautiful and graceful of structures. "Shall we go up to the top?" my friend asked. "Certainly," I replied. The trip took four hours because of the crowds going up and down. Many thousands were on it at once, and each one could advance only in his turn. But I speak of this here in order to say that the beautiful tower was supported by four sustaining legs, starting far apart and converging towards the top. These supported the tower and made it possible. The true Christian is the most commanding and beautiful form of life among men. In this story we want to find out what makes it so. We shall discover that four fundamental things are necessary in order to its full strength and beauty. All must be new from center to circumference. The new nature is shown in the first two pictures. The water is a striking symbol of the cleansing power of God, and His quickening and transforming grace. By God's help the Christian puts away all idols of whatever kind. Though Ezekiel is a thousand miles away and in captivity, yet God gives him this beautiful picture of a new land and a new life. This picture prophecy is partly fulfilled in the return of the Jews from captivity; but it is fully and finally fulfilled, both for men and nations, in Jesus Christ and His Church.

If peace be in the heart,
The wildest winter storm
Is full of solemn beauty,
The midnight lightning-flash
But shows the path of duty,
Each living creature tells
Some new and joyous story,
The very trees and stones
All catch a ray of glory,
If peace be in the heart.
—Charles Francis Richardson.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

else foilows. A human soul is a miniature world, and here are some of the kingdoms which are conquered when the heart is won and made new: 1. The kingdom of the outward life—"filthiness" and "idols." 2. The kingdom of thought and desire—"new spirit" and "heart of flesh." 3. The kingdom of our duties to God—"my statutes," "my judgments," "my people." 4. The kingdom of temporal good—"corn," "no famine," "the fruit," "the field." 5. The kingdom of spiritual ideas and ideals—condemning self and glorying in God. 6. The kingdom of duty and service—"shall be builded," "shall be tilled," "inhabited." 7. The kingdom of prayer—"I will do it," I will be inquired of, "I will increase them."

The Descrt Shall Blossom. A heathen Fingo traveling through Hankey, where the London Missionary Society has a mission, sat down to rest at the church door. He asked one of the deacons how they got food in such a place, for he had formerly known it as a desert. The deacon told him to look and see if he was not in health and well clothed. He called a fine child, and asked him if it did not seem well fed, and asked him if it did not seem well fed, and asked him to attend service next day and see if it was not so with all of them. The Fingo, lifting his hand to heaven, exclaimed, "It is always so where that God is worshiped."—Dr. A. Thomson.

The New Heart. This is the second important condition or factor in making a Christian. The third picture sets this forth. We know that a man or boy will do about as his heart prompts him. The heart of every one is wicked by nature, and is called here a stony heart. If the heart is bad, the nature will continue to be bad, even though it may try to be good, and may really seem to be good for a time. At last the heart will control all the life. The need of a new and loving heart which is the "heart of flesh," is great, because the heart is the seed bed for the life. In the parable of the sower the hard and stony ground could not receive the seed, but the good ground could. When new and right the heart is like the hot bed of the florist, to grow all kinds of beautiful flowers and plants. If it is bad, Satan will use it to grow weeds and thorns. In one of Ezekiel's other pictures (18:31), he says to the people, "Make you a new heart," and here he says "A new heart will I give." This shows that we must work with God,

and let him work in and with us, to get the new heart. Paul puts both acts in working together when he says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to

do of His good pleasure."

The New Power. This is the third needful. thing to make a Christian. It is shown by that strange picture of a dove in the circle. The dove represents the Holy Spirit, as when He descended on Christ at His baptism. The circle stands for both heart and life, and those odd letters are the Hebrew for the great name of God, Jehovah. If one has the Holy Spirit giving right desires and great strength, and has also God ever in him and before him, he will be apt to be a good Christ-The next picture is closely connected with this for it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to understand God's Word, who also makes us love it, and who gives us willingness and strength to obey the commands of God. David says, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." So the Holy Spirit and the Bible are the great forces which make the Christian mighty. Such a one can say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.'

And one of the later prophets cries out. "Not by might nor by power (that is any human effort), but by my Spirit saith the Lord." Those two people seem to be on their knees studying the "roll," which was their Bible. This is the true attitude for all who would learn God's will. If not in the very posture of prayer, one should be reverent, prayerful and earnest in searching the Scriptures. See Acts 17:11 for a model class

in Bible study.

The Electric Current. Every condition of expert operating may be fulfilled, but so long as the electric circuit is closed, all your efforts are simply sounding brass and clattering platinum. Not a single spark of electric life do you transmit; not a single message of good or ill, of bane or blessing, is conveyed to the waiting listener at the other end of the line. Why? Because the battery is not working. And all your working is effort without result, activity without power. But now you open the little brass lever which connects your key to the battery hidden beneath the table—immediately every letter you form thrills with life, every word you write flashes a living message into the mind and heart of the far-away receiver. Through your work, dead and mechanical in itself, the electric battery is now pouring forth its vital stream, flooding with life and power. So the Holy Spirit floods the soul with light, and life and power.—Exchange.

The New Life. This is the fourth important thing to make a beautiful Christian. It follows from the others, and never can exist

without them. But it is the most important of all so far as one's influence and usefulness are concerned. Then it is the first thing the world sees in a Christian. Paul likens a good man to a letter that is "known and read of all men." In the sermon on the mount, Christ said "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Those last two pictures show two ways in which the outward life proves that one is a Christian. One way is by the many blessings which such a person receives from God. These are represented by pictures of the goodly land they dwell in. All the gracious and kindly dealings of God to His people are saying always, to all others, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." The other way is by the goodly people such a person associates with. One is known by the company he keeps, and if he is found at prayer meeting and church service and Sunday School, people will at once say, "Why, he is a Christian." His power and influence are beyond calculation.

Two Notable Illustrations. Jonathan Edwards, by his godly life and abundant labors, transformed Northampton, Mass., to be the model small city in all the world. So John Wesley changed the village of Cornwall, England. A young nobleman rode up and down the streets of that village looking for something stronger than water to drink. At last he stopped, and made impatient inquiry of an old peasant who was on his way home after a day of toil: "How is it that I can't get a glass of liquor anywhere in this wretched village of yours?" he demanded harshly. The old man, recognizing his questioner as a man of rank, pulled off his cap and bowed humbly, but nevertheless there was a proud flash in his faded eye as he answered quietly: "My lord, something over a hundred years ago a man named John Wesley came to these parts." And with that the old peasant walked away.—Sunday School Advocate.

Quiz and Study. 1. What Scripture texts can you quote respecting the heart? 2. What is the great mistake the heart makes? 3. What is the best gift a boy or girl can give to Christ? 4. How do you give it?

Practical Thoughts. 1. God is constantly asking the heart to come to Him for cleansing. 2. Every such call is a warning of peril and punishment. 3. "Is the heart right with God?" is the greatest question one can ask. 4. If the heart is really right, all else will in time be right. 5. No one can come into the new spiritual Kingdom without a new spiritual heart. 6. A single soul, however wicked and ignorant, is worth one's best efforts to save. 7. No two hearts are alike, and no two are saved in just the same way. 8. Jesus Christ is infinite in His merit and resources and so can save all who are willing to be saved. 9. "Son, daughter, give me thine heart." The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the



And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. * * *

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered

them above: but there was no breath in

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God:

come from the four winds.

O breath, and breathe
upon these slain, that
they may live.
So I prophesied as he
commanded me, and
the breath came into
them, and they lived, and



upon their feet, an ex ceeding great army.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EZEKIEL 37:1-14.

Prayer: Our Father, We adore Thee as the Source of all life. We come to Thee for the renewal of our own souls. We pray that we may so live that Thy Spirit may evermore abide with us. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove. With all thy quickening powers. Kindle a flame of sacred love In these cold hearts of ours.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 587-586. Place, vicinity of Babylon. Persons, Ezekiel, resurrected

Scripture Setting: Study of Spiritual Life. Regeneration, necessity and source of, John 3:3-16. From death to life, John 5:24. Jesus, bread of life, John 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47. Jesus and more abundant life, John 10:10. Jesus, the resurrection, abundant life, John 10:10. Jesus, the resurrection, John 11:25, 26. Jesus, the way to the Father, John 14:6. Jesus, giver of eternal life, John 17:2, 3. Purpose of Scriptures, John 20:31. Meaning of baptism, Rom. 6:4, 5. Christ in us, Rom. 8:10. Eternal life manifested in Christ, 1 John 1:1, 2.

Life and Conduct Setting: The Vision. 1. It

was intended to inspire the Jews with hope of deliverance from captivity. 2. It represented Israel as a nation dead, without hope, and scattered one from the other. 3. It was prophetic of the return of the Jews from captivity to their own land; to their national life and to the service of the temple. 4. It declared that only through obedience to God's Word and the influence of His Spirit these things were to be accomplished. 5. It symbolized the power of God's Word and Spirit to restore the spiritually dead to life and to in-heritance of God's best gifts. 6. It foreshadowed the coming of Christ's kingdom and the redemption of the world.

A WONDERFUL VISION.

The Spring. After the long, icy winter has held the earth in its grasp for months, and all nature seems dead and incapable of renewal; trees lift their bare arms to the winds and the grass lies yellow and shrunken, what a miracle it is that spring comes again. How wonderful that the power of God renews the sap in trees and the branches once more are clad in green, and grass and flowers come to life, and the seeds we plant break their shells and come forth as food for man and beast. We should not allow this miracle to grow commonplace to us simply because it occurs each year, for it is actually just as marvelous each time as if it had never occurred before.

Life. Not only is the renewal of life at springtime a miracle, but all life is so. All the wisdom and research of man, with the subtlest instruments he can invent, have not been able to find the secret of life and to tell us what it is. One thing lives and has the power of reproducing life, and another is dead, inert, incapable of growth or selfmovement. The living thing is characterized by certain attributes and qualities which the dead matter lacks; that is all we know, save that the secret is with God and the power

comes from God.

Man a Miracle. The life of humanity and of each man is a miracle. There was a time when there was not one human being in all this great world. When the first man and woman were created, when flesh and blood in human form stood erect and filled with the thinking, feeling spirit, that was miracle. Now, when there are millions of us on the earth, this is but multiplied miracle. Each babe, each boy or girl, is a miracle, more wonderful than even the springtime, for the human being thinks and feels and loves and hopes.

The Spiritual Life. The more clearly we realize the truth that all life, in plant and seed and animal, is full of mystery and wonder, the more we feel that our own natural being, and that of all men and women, is not a commonplace thing but a Divine result, the better will we be prepared to perceive the wonders of the higher life, the spiritual life.

The spiritual life, the life of the soul, is the highest miracle of all, since the soul is the most wonderful part of man's being, and the most wonderful fact in the world save the existence of God Himself. The soul may lose the fulness of its life, just as the plant may wither and die, or the body may grow feeble and lose its powers. Sin, evil, when admitted into the life, tends toward the loss of the spiritual faculties. The spirit of man is at its best only when in direct relation to the Spirit of God. Sin shuts out God's Spirit, cuts off our communication with Him. We might as well expect to live physically without air and light as to live spiritually without the Spirit of God. He is the Source of spiritual life. When He comes to us we are spiritually alive, and when He departs spiritual life declines.

Ezekiel's Vision. The vision of Ezekiel in the valley bore upon life, upon the great mystery of which we have been thinking. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and carried him to a great valley in Chaldea and showed him a multitude of dry bones of

men who had been slain. And there God taught him, and through him the people of Israel, a great lesson. Ezekiel was one of the Jewish exiles in Babylonia. He had been carried away while he was a young man. The king had taken many captives to the city of Babylon, but he also planted a colony of Jews in other parts of his kingdom. Ezekiel was a member of a colony settled on the banks of the Chebar. He was not only a prophet, but he was a priest. Far away from Jerusalem and the temple, he ministered in the spiritual temple to his countrymen. His book is remarkable for the wonderful visions contained in it. He gives an account of his call as a prophet; he tells of the general carrying out of his commission; he tells of the rejection of the people of Israel by God because of their idolatry. He rebukes in detail the sins of the age; he tells of the nature of the judgment upon them and the guilt which caused it. He announces the meaning of the punishment which is now beginning to be inflicted on them. He proclaims God's judgments on seven heathen nations. Then, after the destruction of Jerusalem, he gives prophecies concerning the future of Israel. He announces a glorious consummation. It is among the prophecies concerning the future of Israel that the Vision of the Dry Bones appears.

A Dead Nation. Israel, that had once been a glorious and independent nation, was now a scattered people, captive in a strange land. Under the dominion of a great world-power, it seemed as if they could never recover their nationality, their country, their independence. They seemed like so many dead men: dry and scattered bones on a battle field. They were humiliated, despondent, hopeless. Among themselves they spoke of the valleys of Babylonia, in which many of them dwelt, as their "graves." They felt that they were

a dead nation.

The Valley of Bones. It was to people in this condition and in this frame of mind that Ezekiel's vision came. The Spirit of the Lord showed the prophet a great valley full of bones: bones of multitudes of men that had been slain and left to lie there and bleach and dry in the sun and winds. Life had gone; the flesh had gone; nothing was left but dry bones, and these threatened soon to dissolve into dust. The Spirit asked the prophet if these bones could live again. It seemed a hopeless condition, but Ezekiel, realizing that with God, the Source of life, all things are possible, answered, "O, Lord God, Thou knowest." To Ezekiel, gazing

on the desolation around him, came the command to prophesy upon these bones, and say, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord," and declare that God would clothe them with sinews and flesh again, as proof that He was Lord. With perfect obedience, Ezekiel spake as commanded unto the dry white skeletons. Even as he spoke there was a noise and a shaking and the bones came together in their proper places. Then, wonderful to behold, there came upon them sinews and flesh and skin. Still there was no life in them. They were but the forms of men.

The Breath. Again came the Divine command, and now it said to prophesy unto the breath, "Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Once more he obeyed, and now the mysterious, vital breath came unseen into those human forms. Then from the ground the vast army rose up, stood upon their feet, alive. Such was Ezekiel's vision of the change of dry bones into a host of living men.

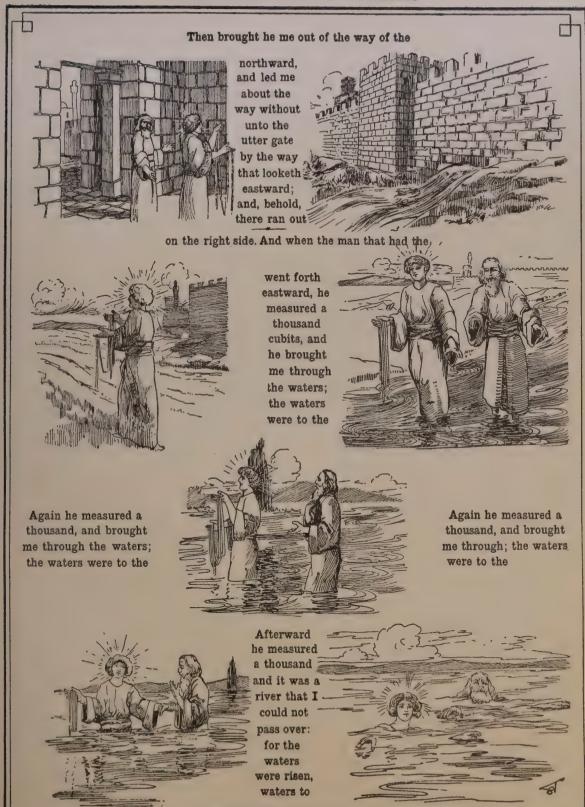
The Meaning. Now the Spirit taught Ezekiel the meaning of his vision. He said, "These bones are the whole house of Israel." He was bidden to prophesy unto them, "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. . . . I shall put my Spirit in you and ye shall live: and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord."

This was therefore, first of all, a message of hope to the discouraged Israelites; a promise of the renewal of their national life. The requickening of their spirits by which this restoration could be accomplished was to be by the Spirit of God: "I shall put My Spirit upon you and ye shall live." This was to be a miracle, directly from God, and not a mere natural reawakening. This did, in due time, come to pass, and the people of Israel—the dry bones—were restored to their country and for many ages enjoyed once more their national life. Again, Jerusalem became their capital. Again the temple arose, and, purified from idolatry, they worshiped Jehovah as of old. This surely was a great miracle, to bring the scattered Israelites together once more into their own land and to restore their national life.

Spiritual Resurrection. The spiritual life of today is another great miracle. God has raised up a people out of the death of sin and has filled the world with the spiritual power of Christians and of the Church. By nature, sinful men are like the dry bones—lifeless. It is the Spirit of God that has come and is the Source of all the spiritual power in the world.

This is true of the individual sinner. He is as the dry bones; it requires the same Almighty power to raise him from spiritual death. But no case is hopeless. To man it is impossible, but God, the Miracle-worker, who creates the springtime, who gives life to man and beast and plant, can take the worst sinner and create him into a new man.

THE LIFE GIVING STREAM



a river that could not be passed over.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EZEKIEL 47:1-12.

Prayer: We thank Thee for the blessed revelation of Thyself in Christ, in Thy Word and in Thy providence. We thank Thee that through faith the grace of salvation is given unto us. We pray that the river of living waters may speedily bring refreshment and salvation unto all men, everywhere. In the name of Christ. Amen.

"Beneath the cross those waters rise, and he who finds them there.

All through the wilderness of life, the living stream may bear;

And blessings follow in his steps until, where'er he goes,

The moral wastes begin to bud and blossom as the rose," -Anon, in Peloubet's Notes,

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. about 560. Place, vicinity of Babylon. Persons, Ezekiel, and the Divine Messenger.

Scripture Setting: Study of the Water of Life. Satisfies eternally, John 4:14. Jesus the source, John 4:10; 7:37. Believers become a source of living water, John 7:38, 39. Given freely, Rev. 21:6; 22:17. Wells of salvation, Isa. 12:3. God shall lead to, Isa. 49:10. Is without price, Isa. 55:1. Life and Conduct Setting: The significance of

the vision which Ezekiel saw may be set forth as follows: 1. The river of God has its source high up in the Temple where God dwells. 2. The waters of life would issue from the Temple as a result of God's reoccupying His house. 3. The widening and deepening stream symbolized the growth and increase of the small number that would return from exile and of the kingdom of God then represented by the Jewish kingdom. 4. Wherever the river of life flows, the trees of life grow—in the heart, in the church, in the world. 5. The transformed desert pictured the change God would work in the then desolate land of Israel. 6. The change produced by this river typifies the change to be wrought by the spreading of Christ's Kingdom to the desolate places of the earth.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

A Great Blessing. Pure, clean, refreshing, purifying water has been, in the literatures and languages of all peoples a symbol of good and desirable things. Nothing is more suggestive of satisfaction than this common, necessary, universal product of nature. The wells that the patriachs digged became one of their most prized possessions. Among the worst of the sufferings the Israelites endured on their wilderness journey was lack of water at times, and there was pathos in their cry to Moses as the thirsty multitude said, "Give us water to drink." In the Jewish ceremonial law, constant reference is made to water for the purposes of purification. When the waters on the wilderness journey of Israel were found bitter, great was the disappointment of those who had hastened their steps through heat and dusty sand for draughts which they could not after all enjoy. When record was made of droughts that caused a price to be put upon water we realize to what extremities suffering men were brought.

The Psalmist uses no more beautiful symbol than The Psalmist uses no more beautiful symbol than that of water, "trees planted by rivers of water," "He leadeth me beside the still waters," "as the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." Solomon can find no lovelier symbol for a message of cheer—"as cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far counto a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.'' The prophets are full of this symbolism. Isaiah tells of good to come, saying, "in the wilderness shall waters break out," "the thirtsy land shall become springs of water," and his great expression of God's invitations is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, Come ye to the waters." Jesus at the well told the Samaritan woman, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Water is the cleaning symbol used in baptism by the command of Christ. The Bible in its closing chapter

calls, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The Vision. It is of waters Ezekiel tells in this lesson. After he had foretold the restoration of Israel from captivity to their own land, the revival of their national and religious life, he told also of the temple as it was to be, its parts and ornaments, the priests' chambers and the outward court. Then he pictured the return of the glory of the God of Israel to the temple. Then he saw in his vision, as he was led through the temple and to the door of the temple, waters issuing out from under the threshold of the temple to the eastward. When he was led out of the gate to the northward, since he could not follow the course of the waters from where he stood, he again saw an increasing stream pouring forth. As the waters swelled, the man with him, who had a line, began to measure the waters, and he measured a thousand cubits as they waded and the stream was to their ankles. Pressing on, as the river deepened, he measured another thousand, and now the waters were to the knees. After passing on the distance of another thousand, the waters were to the loins. Rising higher and higher, as he measured another thousand, the river was so deep that he could not repass it. Now they were "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."

In his vision, the Lord asked if he had seen all this, as he caused him to return to the brink of the river and gaze. He saw on the bank many trees on the one side and on the other. Then the Lord said to him, "These waters issue out toward the east

country and go down into the desert and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. . . And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all treef for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat and the leaf thereof for medicine."

The Meaning. Such was the wonderful stream Ezekiel saw issuing from beneath the temple and becoming a great river that flowed on through desert places, enriching all lands through which it passed. This means that blessings and salvation were to flow out from the temple into great multitudes and unto many peoples. God's dwelling with Israel was to bear blessings unto all. The waters of salvation were no longer to be shut up, as it were, in pools beneath the temple, but to break forth as a river that would flow through desert places and make them blossom. No one locality, no one people, was to be given the monopoly of salvation.

On account of its broad, universal spirit, this is one of the most significant and beautiful passages in the Bible. It is a foretelling of the time when Jewish exclusiveness was to be broken down, when the treasure that was put in their keeping should be distributed among all the children of men. God had chosen the Jews not for their own sakes but that they might receive the revelation and preserve it for other nations as well as for themselves. Abraham had been told that in him "should all the nations of the earth be blessed." This was the teaching with which the Jewish people began their career. But, being set apart from other nations in order to preserve the truth, they, as time went on, came to look upon themselves as favored of God for themselves and not for the sake of what they could give to mankind. This vision of Ezekiel revives the universal spirit of religion and reminds the Jews that the blessings of salvation are not for Jews exclusively but for all nations.

"Salvation is of the Jews." And indeed the waters of life have flowed into the world from beneath the temple. Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism. The Jews, in spite of their lapses and errors and sins,

preserved for mankind the religion of Jehovah. Amid the idolatries of the ancient world the Jews, in the main, kept alive the conception of God as a Spirit and as the Creator and Preserver of all things.

From beneath the temple flowed out the river of the Old Testament Scriptures. To the prophets and holy men of Israel did these revelations come, and they wrote down and preserved for mankind this wonderful

and priceless volume.

Our Debt to the Jew. From Israel came the ethical teachings that today are the foundation principles of all our best modern life. We received the principles of our art from the Greeks, our principles of law and government largely from the Romans, but the modern world received its morals from

the Hebrew people.

Above all gifts of the Hebrew race to the world, there came from it, after the flesh, Jesus Christ. He came into the world in their land, He was nurtured among Jews, He made His first disciples of Jews, He worshiped His Father in their temple and in their synagogues. He used the Old Testament as the basis of His teachings and proclaimed that in them were foretellings of Himself.

Universal Religion. Moreover, the Gospel was carried out from the land of its birth to many nations by the Apostles and disciples of Christ, all of the Apostles being Jews, and most of the early missionary disciples being also of that people.

Unto us have come the waters of that river of salvation, and the waters are flowing everywhere, into all lands, for the blessing

of all nations.

During a revival a worldly man was awakened, but tried to conceal his feelings from his wife, who was a Christian woman. While she went to church one evening, he was left at home with his three-year-old daughter. He began to walk up and down the room in great anxiety of mind. The child observed his restlessness, and asked, "What is the matter with you, Papa?" He replied, "Nothing," but continued to show that he was troubled. The child watched him sympathetically and then asked simply, "Papa, if you were thirsty, wouldn't you go and get a drink of water?" It seemed to him as if a voice from Heaven had spoken to him. Why should he not refresh his thirsty soul? He thought of the living fountain opened in the Gospel. He believed, and from that evening he tegan a new life.

evening he began a new life.

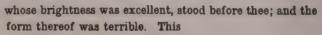
Practical Truths: 1. Christ is the true "temple" and the "door" from which come the living waters. 2. Growth in grace is progressive and increasing. 3. If we drink of the waters of life we shall be sustained, strengthened and blessed. 4. We shall bear fruit. 5. We shall be the means of

healing and saving others.

DR. C. D. WILSON.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This





was of fine gold, his



of silver, his belly and his



of brass, His



of iron, his



part of iron and part of clay.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which



that were of iron
and clay, and brake
them to pieces.
Then was the iron,
the clay, the brass,
the silver, and
the gold,



together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried

them
away,
that no
place was
found for
them: and the



that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS DANIEL 2.

Prayer: Our Father, With Thee is all wisdom and light and understanding. Thou canst give unto men as Thou seest best. Grant unto us the light that may make plain the way wherein we should walk. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun Does his successive journeys run; His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and wane no more. -Watts

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. about 605. Place, Babylon. Persons, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Shad-rach, Meshach and Abednego, magicians and sor-Cerera

Scripture Setting: Study of the Prosperity of the Kingdom. A blessing unto all, Gen. 49:10. Shall possess uttermost part of the earth. Psa. 2:2. alted among heathen, Psa. 46:4, 10. Earth filled with His glory, Psa. 72:2-19. Kings shall praise God, Psa. 138:4, 5. All nations shall come, Isa. 2:2. An eternal kingdom, Isa. 9:2-7. Nature changed, Wilderness and desert transformed, Isa. 11:6-10. Isa. 35:1. Ends of earth to see salvation, Isa. 52:1-15. Good tidings for all, Isa. 61:1-11. The Spirit poured out, Joel 2:26-32. Like leaven, Matt. 13:33. Like mustard seed, Matt. 13:31, 32. Signs of, Luke 7:22. All enemies subdued, 1 Cor. 15:24, 28. All things in one. Eph. 1:10. All kingdoms Christ's,

Rev. 11:15.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of this lesson are: 1. The tyranny and unreasonableness of a heathen king. 2. The blind fury and short-sightedness of a king that would slay all his wise men. 3 A common danger draws Daniel and his companions together and closer to God. 4. The power of a good man to petition God and prevent disaster. 5. God's purpose in revealing the future to a heathen king, thus proclaiming to a whole nation His nature and power as the only true God. 6. God advancing His servants and showing the superiority of the man whose trust is in the Lord. The growth of Christ's kingdom from a small beginning and its ultimate triumph over the king-doms of the world, foretold.

THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD AND OF CHRIST.

The Anxieties of Kings. It is natural that the minds of such men as build up vast enterprises should ponder the question as to how long that which they have established will last. Men often begin their works with selfish motives and then, as their works expand, they grow into a larger purpose and They come to a desire to leave interest. behind them a permanent institution, a kingdom that passes to their descendants, a fortune that remains in their line. Napoleon Bonaparte was at first anxious to gain power for himself; then he wished to establish a dynasty with his brothers on thrones of other countries and with a son of his own at the head of the Empire. In a world of change, very few things last through the ages. Empires come and go. Fortunes are scattered. Noted families sink to obscurity and new ones become leaders. When Napoleon was on St. Helena, he was fond of comparing himself with the kings of ancient times and of comparing them all with Christ. He said other empires pass away, but that of Christ endures age after age. That which appeared to him most wonderful was that Christ's kingdom abides, while the great structure he himself had reared had fallen to pieces in a short time.

Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the vast Babylonian Empire, had inherited his throne from his father, and, being a great conqueror himself, he had reasonable hope that his crown would pass on to his son. But this man, who was the mightiest in the world in his day, had thoughts that ran far beyond I

his own period. His father and he had conquered other nations; would Babylon some day fall? What new empires would emerge? Such thoughts necessarily force themselves upon kings and leaders of nations. In our day, such questions as these arise: Will our Republic endure? Will rival nations dispute our power in the Pacific Ocean? Will the monarchies of Europe fall? Will the British Empire go to pieces? By such considerations we may be helped to understand the frame of mind and the order of thoughts of Nebuchadnezzar.

A Dream-Vision. A year on the throne, a vear of ceaseless activity, of high-strung output of energy, had thrown Nebuchadnezzar into a sleepless state. In broken sleep he saw pass before him, like a panorama. strange and monstrous visions. Pleasant "dreams take a weight from off our waking toil:" unpleasant ones "leave a weight upon our waking thoughts." On his royal bed. Nebuchadnezzar tossed uneasily; dreams came and went; some made little impression; while others remained with him as presentiments of coming evils. One night there came to the monarch a dream of unusual vividness and strangeness, that impressed him as having some deep meaning and as bearing upon himself and the future. As he awoke he could see the vast outlines of his vision fading away as a mist. It was gone. Yet a feeling that what he had seen was of deep import remained with him. Strive as he would, he could not summon back that haunting imagery; the light of day, the scenery

beheld by his opened eyes, made fresh pictures upon his retina and overlaid the vision.

A Lost Dream. Haunted by the vanished dream, the king arose, partook of food, and pondered. He was used to issuing commands and having them obeyed. If he could not recall his own dream, he could order other men to bring it forth out of its hiding place. He would do that. This seems to us nowadays a monstrous thing to demand of any man. But a tyrant like Nebuchadnezzar was not restrained by what is reasonable. Moreover, he and his nation considered dreams in an entirely different light from that of the modern world; we take them with little seriousness, while they often regarded them as revelations. Still further, he had about him classes of men who made a business of dealing with the occult: men who were in some cases professional interpreters of dreams.

We would think it very strange today if a monarch in a civilized country kept men about him to read the signs of the future in the stars; to interpret omens by the entrails of fowls or the flight of birds, yet this was a common custom of ancient monarchs. So Nebuchadnezzar called for the chief men among the magicians, the astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans of the city. These men represented various orders, some being priests, some scribes, while others dealt with enchantment, magic, astrology and other means of attempting to read the future or interpret mysteries. They in general enjoyed great favor and received large profits. Doubtless some of them were intelligent men who on occasion gave sound opinions and good advice and sensible interpretations. But as a rule they dealt in trickery.

A Tyrant's Demand. While these men had thus far succeeded in inducing the king to believe in their mysterious powers they were now to be put to the most difficult test conceivable. It was a test that no perfectly sane man would have asked of them, but Nebuchadnezzar was not entirely sane, and later he suffered from insanity for a considerable period. Behold then the imposing company of the magicians and their associates assembled before the mighty king. The robed and crowned monarch had often summoned them before but never on an errand like this. It was a simple matter for him to state that he had had a troubled dream and for the magicians to ask for an account of the vision and they would furnish the interpretation. The king amazed them by declaring he could not recall his dream but expected them to bring it forth out of the recesses of his memory and then to interpret it. He menaced them with the threat that unless this were done they should all die, but added if they succeeded they would be greatly rewarded. Horrified at their critical position, they declared such a demand as unheard of and the fulfilling of it beyond any man's power. In his fury, the king decreed their death.

A Real Seer. This decree, if carried out, would have included Daniel and his three friends, who were already enrolled among the wise men of the capital, and who by counsel and understanding had gained the good will of the monarch. When Daniel learned of this peril, he sought the captain of the king's guard and obtained a delay. Daniel and his friends then besought God to reveal the matter to them, and in answer to these prayers the secret was made known to Daniel in a night vision. Thanking God for his mercy, Daniel told the captain of the guards to spare the wise men, and that he would fulfill the king's demand.

The Dream Becalled. The king on his throne listened as under a spell while Daniel recalled to him that dream which all his own efforts had not been able to revive in his memory. Strange must it have been to him to have another man's mind give back to him that which had vanished from his own. Announcing to the king that it was God Himself who had revealed the dream to him, Daniel portrayed the vision of a great image, bright and terrible, which Nebuchadnezzar had seen, an image with head of fine gold, with breast and arms of silver, with belly and thighs of brass, with legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. He told that in the dream there had come a stone that was cut without hands, which smote the image on the feet and broke them, and had broken the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold to pieces fine as the chaff of a threshing floor, that the wind had carried away the dust, while the stone became a vast mountain.

Again did Nebuchadnezzar see his own vision and acknowledge that this had been his dream. Then Daniel gave him the interpretation of kingdom after kingdom arising and falling until God should set up one that should never be destroyed. Awed by the mysterious recovery of his dream; awed by an interpretation that opened the future and revealed how short-lived would be his own greatness and that of kings after him; awed by the glimpse of that vast spiritual Kingdom God would establish, Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, acknowledging the God of Daniel as the true God. Then he set Daniel and his friends in places of highest power in his kingdom.

The Everlasting Kingdom. All that Nebuchad-

The Everlasting Kingdom. All that Nebuchadnezzar foresaw in that strange vision and which Daniel interpreted for him has come to pass. Men differ as to just what kingdoms were foreshadowed, but the details are of little importance. The Kingdom which is to abide has come. The older empires have passed away. But age after age beholds God's Kingdom growing wider and stronger.

have passed away. But age after age beholds God's Kingdom growing wider and atronger.

Practical Truths. 1. United prayer is a great power. 2. Give glory to God for whatever He does through you. 3. Let us realize fully that God's Kingdom is the greatest power on earth. 4. If you are promoted, help to advance your loyal friends. 5. The wonders of God's dealings should cause all to fall upon their faces in adoration.

THE FIERY FURNACE

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the



one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his



to bind Shadrach,
Meshach, and
Abednego,
and to
cast them
into the
burning
fiery
furnace.
Then
these
men were

in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were



that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

DAN. III: 19-22.

THE FIERY FURNACE

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,



bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchad nezzar the



was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see



and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then.

Nebuchadnezzar came near to the



of the midst of the fire.

and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS DANIEL 3.

Prayer: Our Father, When we are tested, grant that we may not fail. Give us such faith that we may go forward in confidence. May we not fear the furnaces, but know Thou art with us. In the name of Christ. Amen.

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. about 580. Place, Babylon, Persons, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Nebuchadnezzar.

Scripture Setting: Study of Trials of Faith. Noah preparing the ark, Gen. 6:14-22; Heb. 11:7. Abraham leaving home, Gen. 12:1-4. Abraham offering Isaac, Gen. 22:1-19. Moses when sent to Pharaoh, Ex. 3:11, 12. Moses at Red Sea, Ex. 14:15. Joshua and Israel taking Jericho, Josh. 6. Gideon commanded to deliver Israel, Judg. 6:36-40. Job, by affliction and adversity, Job 1:2. Ezra leaving Babylon, Ezra 8:22. The Syrophenician woman, Matt. 15:21-28. The two blind men, Matt. 9:28.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features

of this wonderful story are: 1. A king debasing his subjects by compelling them to worship a dumb idol. 2. No toleration or liberty of conscience permitted: it was obey or burn. 3. The enmity of evil men against the good. 4. The remarkable faith and courage of the three Hebrew youths in defying the king and the fiery furnace. 5. The swift destruction of those who cast them into the furnace, showing how intensely the furnace was heated. 6. The intervention of God and the miracle of deliverance from the flames. 7. The effect on the king and his proclamation regarding the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

THREE MEN WHO WOULD NOT DO WRONG.

What Would You Do? Would you worship an idol if by so doing you could save your life, and if by refusing to do this you were in danger of death? That is a very hard question, and Providence very kindly spares most of us from having to be put to the test. But a great many people have been tried in this or a similar manner, and to the honor of religion and human nature, by the grace of God, they have been able to refuse to do wrong and have through painful experiences entered into Heaven. Certain of those who have been forced to choose between denving Christ and a martyr's death have been young people, some of them mere girls, but they proved loyal and brave, faced lions, bore the fires of the stake, and thus, by their faithfulness, won others to the Master who could help them to such strength and courage in perils and tortures.

So there is no doubt that many young people today would surprise themselves and their friends by what they would bravely suffer for Christ if some dreadful persecution arose.

A Vain King. There were three men long ago in Babylon, who had to face the question whether they would deny the true God and bow to an image or not, and it was under most trying circumstances they had to arrive at their decision. It was in the latter part of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar that this happened. That king had been greatly impressed in the second year of his kingship by the interpretation of his dream by Daniel. As the years, full of wars and victories rolled by, the influence of that memory died away. He had brought many

nations into subjection to his rule. He had rebuilt Babylon until it was a marvel of splendor and glory. He was so accustomed to abject obedience from all men that he could not bear to be crossed in any of his

purposes, small or great.

The Great Image. It appears that after his return from his conquests, while he was exulting in the sense of his greatness and power, he conceived the idea of setting up in the midst of a vast plain an enormous image of gold as a symbol of the splendor and grandeur of his kingdom and of himself. When this great statue of purest metal was in its place and the rays of the sun made it shine like something not of this earth, the king sent throughout his wide empire a summons to all the great men to come up to Babylon to behold it and to worship it. Obedient to the command, these chief men came from every part of the empire in their chariots and on their horses, in splendid array, to take part in the dedication of the statue as the symbol of Babylonian power. Princes, captains, judges, treasurers, governors, counselors, sheriffs, rulers of provinces, all came. So far as appears, all these subordinates of the mighty monarch were quite ready to bow and bend and worship whenever and wherever Nebuchadnezzar bade them. No matter what their private opinions were, they brought no scruples with them.

The Test. At the appointed time all assembled in the vicinity of the golden statue. Then a herald cried out unto all that at a signal, the sound of many musical instruments, all were to fall down and worship the image. The herald also announced that

any who failed to obey this decree were to be cast into a fiery furnace as rebels against the king's words. With such a threat in their ears, and with the king's officers near to observe and report such as failed to bow, we may be sure that the sound of the vast orchestra quickly bent thousands of supple knees to the earth. Down they all went. Loudly they all shouted their salutations of reverence to the huge, shining, dumb idol.

The Faithful. It is probable that Nebuchadnezzar considered the statue as a symbol of the power of the empire and bowing to it as an acknowledgment of his imperial rule, and that he deemed such as refused to bend as rebels against his supremacy. So did the Romans at one period demand that honors ordinarily given only to their deities be given to the emperors and statues of the But whatever view Nebuchademperors. nezzar took of the matter, the worshipers of Jehovah were unwilling to give to any but God religious devotions. It is probable that all the Jews thus refused, but most of them were too obscure to be noticed.

The Accusers. But the envy of the native Chaldeans had already been stirred by the exaltation to high places of the Hebrews, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who, after the interpretation of the dream of the king, had been exalted and still remained in power. The fact that Daniel at this time was not arraigned may have been owing to his position as the chief of the magicians, a position so high as to remove him from the reach of foes; he may also have been absent from the city or may have been ill and so not present at the ceremonies. But the other three notable Hebrews were not only absent from the dedication, but when the sound of the music swept through the city, and men everywhere bent low, they stood erect and silent. Those who already envied them, saw in this conduct a chance to strike them down from their high places and get themselves into office.

The Trial. The Chaldeans carried their tale to the king. Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage, when the three Jews were brought before him, questioned them, found them ready to admit the charge. He offered them another chance; again the music would sound and they could then bow; while another refusal would send them to the fiery furnace. Unintimidated, resolute in their loyalty to God, they replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burn-

ing fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Noble answer, worthy of all emulation.

The Sentence. Furious at this defiance, his face convulsed by anger, the king commanded that the furnace be made ready and heated seven times beyond the usual temperature. He would be present himself to see these rebels burned. He would see if their God delivered them. Thither was carried his royal chair, and the king sat down at a safe distance to see the rebels consumed. His mightiest men bound the victims and cast them into the blaze. Flames leaped forth and slew the captors of the three Jews.

The Deliverance. But an amazing sight was that which the king now beheld. His three victims were suddenly unbound and were walking about in the furnace as if it were a place of comfort and not of terror, and with them was a fourth form, as of some Divine Being.

Unable to resist such a demonstration of the power of the God in whom these men believed, the king cried aloud to them to come forth. As from a place of perfect safety the three men came out at the word of the king, while the nobles and princes, gathered there to witness the death of rebels. were filled with awe, for not a hair of their heads was singed, nor was the smell of fire upon them. Sudden and changeful as ever, the king now cried out in adoration of the true God, and decreed that all men everywhere should worship Jehovah, the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who alone could deliver His servants in such a manner.

The true way to real influence with others is loyalty to what is right and true. They are the strong people who can, when there is a call of duty, stand against the multitude.

During Queen Mary's reign, Bishop Hooper was sentenced to be burned to death. A man tried to make him recant, and said, "Life is sweet and death is bitter." But Hooper replied, "The death to come is more bitter and the life to come is more sweet." When led to the stake, a box was placed before him, containing a pardon from the queen if he would deny his faith. He cried out, "If you love my soul, away with it!"

Practical Truths. 1. Do not let serious impressions prove to be transient. 2. Beware of pride that leads to self-worship. 3. Be not tempted by worldly interests nor frightened by worldly threats. 4. Rather offend the powers that be than God. 5. Decide for God and follow Him at all costs.



DANIEL'S ANSWER TO THE KING

BY BRITON RIVIERE

Darius, the king of Persia, having made a decree that forced every man to worship graven images, cast Daniel, who refused to do so, into the den of lions. Here his destruction seemed inevitable.

Darius, though a heathen, feared Daniel and had great respect for his God. He hoped that Daniel would be protected and not destroyed. So the king passed the night fasting and had no music, nor could he sleep. Going early in haste to the den of lions, he cried to Daniel, "Is thy God whom thou servest able to deliver thee from the lions?" Having passed the night among the lions unharmed, Daniel turns his back upon them in calm confidence so strongly expressed in the words he now, with upturned face, addresses to the king, "My God hath sent His angel and hath shut the lions' mouths."

Riviere has made a specialty of painting wild lions. In this picture the erect and dignified figure of Daniel; the light from the now open den that had been sealed the night before; the grouping of the wondering lions and the dark background of the den make it tremendously impressive. In contrast with Riviere's other picture of Daniel this is noticeable: In the other, Daniel faced the lions, and the menacing attitudes of the brutes portrayed the first shock—the test of faith, while here, confidence and safety are expressed by the upturned face, the subdued lions and Daniel turning his back upon them.

-JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON



DANIEL'S ANSWER TO THE KING.

BRITON RIVIERE, 1840.

Briton Riviere, born in London in 1840, is the son of a drawing master, who was one of a family (of French Huguenot extraction) of artists and drawing masters notable in Cheltenham and Oxford in the time of the latter Georges.

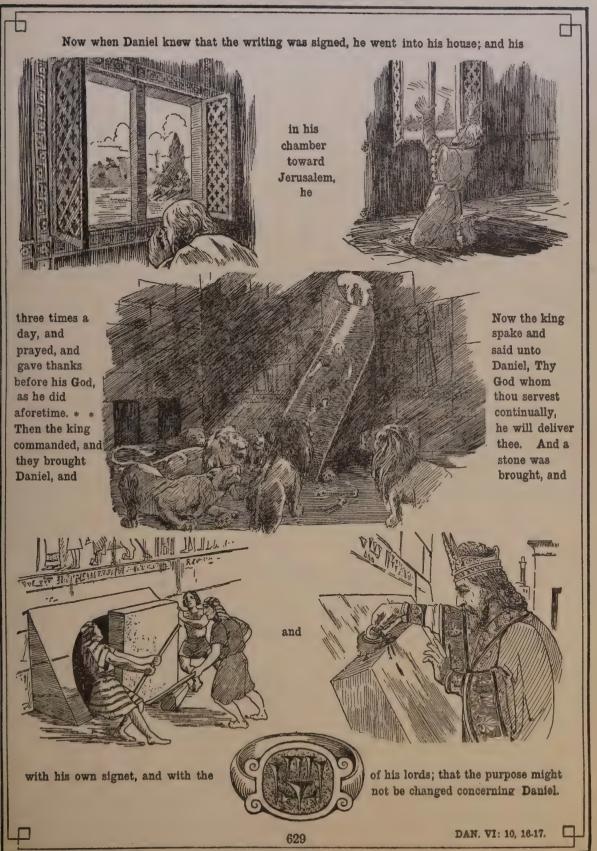
From an early age, Briton delighted in picturing the cats and dogs of the neighboring houses; the cab and dray horses of London streets together with their drivers; and the ducks and swans of the Regent's Canal and the famous Serpentine in Hyde Park.

Landseer, during the painter's boyhood, was at the very height of his fame, and hardly had the youth completed his tenth year when the great artistic movement of the Pre-Raphaelites shook artistic England to its core. By father and uncles, the growing lad heard pro and con the purposes of the brotherhood discussed. Its avowed object was the encouragement in artists of an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature. John Ruskin, the great art critic and teacher famously defined its principles as the effort "to paint things as they probably did look and happen; not as, by rules of art developed under Raphael, they might be supposed gracefully, deliciously, or sublimely to have happened." The evident truth of the brotherhood's aims appealed to the youth so that his earliest work was much influenced by them. Even in his latest, is to be noted, by the trained eye, a regard for the honest verisimilitude of events and things that lifts Riviere's work, for sincerity of intention and truth of statement, far above the ruck of merely academic painters.

At eighteen, Riviere exhibited first at the Royal Academy. Still painting and studying, he took his degree from Oxford University in 1867, and thereupon settled down to the production of a list of animal and figure compositions that attest alike a breadth of knowledge, a stretch of imagination, and a mastery of technique that has justly earned his fame as the greatest English animal painter since Landseer. In many respects, he is held even greater than the famed Sir Edwin.

Of his pictures, "The Poacher's Nurse" (1866), and "Sympathy" (1878) have been always popular, but his "Circe" (1871) and "Daniel" (1872) were the first of his large paintings to attract marked attention. These were followed by "Persepolis" (1878, his masterpiece), "In Manus Tuas Domine" (1879), "Rizpah" (1886), "A Mighty Hunter Before the Lord" (1891), "Beyond Man's Footsteps" (1894, in the National Gallery), and "To the Hills" (1901). "Daniel's Answer to the King" is one of his later works.

JAMES BEALINGS.



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Then the king



and passed the night fasting: neither were



brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king



in the morning, and went in haste unto



of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to



O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his



and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the



exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was



and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they



which had accused Daniel, and they



them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

DAN, VI: 21-24.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS DANIEL 6.

Prayer: Our Father, Thy throne is ever open unto us, that we may come boldly and find help in time of need. We rejoice that in seasons of direst distress we may commune with Thee, and whether we live or die we may find rest and peace in Thee. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Many mighty men are lost
Daring not to stand,
Who for God had been a host
By joining Daniel's band.
Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. about 537. Place, Babylon. Persons, Daniel, Darius, accusers of Daniel. Scripture Setting: Miraculous Deliverance of God's People (Old Testament instances). Israel from Pharaoh's army, Ex. 14:23-30. Gibeon from five kings, Josh. 10:11. Israel from Midian, Judges 7:16-22. Israel from Syria, 2 Kings 6:17-23. Samaria from Syria, 2 Kings 7:6-7. Judah from Sennacherib, 2 Kings 19:35-36. Three Hebrews from fiery furnace, Dan. 3:23-27. Jonah from the sea, Jonah 1:17; 2:10.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of this story are: 1. The envy and jealousy aroused

by Daniel's blameless character and advancement lead his enemies to plot his destruction. 2. Daniel's faith and steadfastness bring honor to his God. 3. The weakness of a king who by flattery could be tricked into destroying his most trusted minister, as compared with the strength of a Daniel, whose faith in God enabled him to face lions. 4. Daniel in his life had so honored God that the heathen king was confident that God would honor Daniel. 5. The ministry of God's angels as shown in the protection of Daniel from the lions. 5. The just punishment meted out to Daniel's accusers—the wicked cast into the pit they digged for another.

LIONS THAT COULD NOT BITE.

Lions' Dens. Lions' dens are, of course, nowadays in the savage parts of the earth, far away from our country, or in our land they are in the iron cages of menageries or zoölogical gardens. Young people, and older ones too, hugely enjoy going to see these great beasts in their cages and find them very noble looking, grand creatures in such safe places. Still other people delight in going off to Africa and Asia, where lions still are to be found in their savage state, and hunting for them with powerful rifles. Hunters of big game feel proud when they have stalked a lion in its native wilderness, running the risk of being wounded or killed, and bringing it low with a rifle ball wellaimed. Such bring home the lions' skins as trophies of pleasant adventures.

Other Dens. But it is true that in our own country, as in every land, there are many other dens of lions, in a figurative but real sense. This was the sense in which Paul wrote, in his prison at Rome, after he had been brought to his first trial before the emperor and had defended himself so that at that time he was not condemned to death. He said he had been delivered of God "from the lion's mouth." Every wicked cause in the world; every group of people opposed to the right; every evil force at work; everything that is set against the good and true is in a real sense a lions' den. More than that, every one who takes a stand for the right and the true is sure at some time and in some way to be cast into such a den of

It is the very nature of evil and of people who are under the power of evil, to antagonize that which is good. If you take your stand for what is right and true, evil forces will at once array themselves against you.

Other Heroes. This has always been true in every land. When Aristides was in power in Athens he was so calm and fair in all his judgments that he became known as "the Just;" and wicked men who did not want justice done, but wished their own plans carried out, had him banished from the city. They cast him into the lions' den of exile; but that did not hurt him, for that act made his name shine all the brighter, and he is venerated by all good men. In the early ages of Christianity, especially, hosts of the followers of Christ were persecuted. arraigned before the courts, cast into prison and put to death. Many of them were literally given to lions who slew them in the arena for the entertainment of the populace. But by these sufferings the martyrs glorified Christ, won multitudes to the Master and entered into Heaven.

The heroes of every good cause, the men and women whose names we most revere in ancient and in modern times, have suffered in the lions' dens of antagonism, persecution, hatred, misunderstanding and censure, but the good they stood for has triumphed; they have rejoiced to endure hardship for their cause and have made the world better by their faith and loyalty.

A Good Man. It is because of what Daniel's life and example mean to us today that we may profitably recall his heroism. He had risen to great place and standing in Babylon in the early days of Nebuchadnezzar and had held positions of power under

successive empires and monarchs. Now Darius the Mede was supreme, and he had set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty princes, and over these he had placed three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first. On account of the excellent spirit that was in him, the king was thinking of setting him over the whole realm. He was to be Prime Minister. Such authority and influence as Daniel had and his prospect of promotion were certain to arouse the envy of many other men. Envy is one of the beasts that breathe out smoke and fire and venom. These men tried to find some fault in Daniel's public or private life, that they might attack him on that score, but he had lived so blamelessly they could discover no flaw.

The Plot. But his foes, seeking for some point of attack, knew that he was out of sympathy with the idolatrous religion of the country, and that he was most devout in the observance of the worship of Jehovah. They said among themselves they could find no occasion against him, "except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." They saw into his character deeply enough to be aware that nothing could deviate him from his religious convictions and worship. These men, representing the highest officers of the nation under Daniel, persuaded Darius to sign a decree that any one who should ask anything of any god or man for thirty days except from the king should be cast into a den of lions. This plan, no doubt, appealed to the vanity of Darius; and he did not foresee that in the carrying out of the scheme he would strike his favorite minister.

A Brave Man. Under such circumstances a great many people would decide that they were doing their duty if they drew the curtains and prayed where none could see them. The world owes a great deal to the fact that Daniel was not that kind of a man. When he learned of the king's decree, he went to his house. It was his custom, common among Jews, to open a window toward Jerusalem and kneel before that and pray three times each day. This habit of so prominent a man could not but be known. On this occasion Daniel was followed by spies who noted that his daily prayers to Jehovah did not cease. This report was carried to Darius, who was grieved that Daniel was thus entrapped by an unchangeable decree. Darius now realized that a trap had been laid deliberately for Daniel, but he was helpless. At every suggestion they reminded the king that a decree of the monarch could not be changed. When Palissy, the Huguenot potter, was lying a prisoner in the Bastile for his adherence to the Protestant faith, it is said that the king of France, who greatly esteemed him personally, visited him, and told him if he did not comply with the established religion, he should be forced, however unwillingly, to leave him in the hands of his foes. "Forced, sire!" answered the old man, with fire and energy; "this is not to speak like a king. But they who can force you cannot force me. I can die."

Among the Lions. Sympathizing with Daniel, helpless so far as he was concerned. Darius could offer no hope, save the words: "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." It was the custom in that land to keep dens of hungry lions for the punishment of criminals, and it was as an offender against the law Daniel was now east among these savage beasts, while the opening was covered with a great stone. The seal of the king, which it was death to unlawfully break, was set there. The king went away sad, passed the night fasting and sleepless and forbade that music should sound in the palace. This conduct reveals the nature of Darius in a good light, as a man of kindness and justice who lamented the conditions under which he had been forced to act. Still hope lived in his breast, and he had some blind confidence that the God of Daniel would work some wonder in his behalf. Early in the morning he hastened to the scene of his unwilling punishment of a good man. With a ray of hope he called to Daniel, and was overjoyed to hear the voice of the brave servant of the Almighty who assured him God had kept him in safety. Speedily was the brave man freed from his captivity. Swift vengeance now fell upon the authors of this crime. A decree of the king went forth calling on all men to adore the living God in whom Daniel had trusted and who had so wonderfully delivered him.

Honored. Not only was Daniel after this more firmly fixed in the confidence of his king, but God was made known and honored. So every one who is true to convictions and to the right at the expense of temporary trials, gains far more than he loses. Such loyal lives reveal the reality of religion in a more convincing way than mere teachings, however important, can do. All of us are called upon today, as really as was Daniel, to be true at all costs and to trust God for the results.

Practical Truths. 1. It is fair to suppose that when any advise cruel measures, they have base designs hidden beneath their apparent motives. 2. When you are manifestly wrong, be willing to alter your course. 3. Do not expect to escape false accusations or censure, but so live that these will find no justification in fact. 4. When there is only choice between sin and suffering, choose the latter. 5. It is not in the power of men to keep us from prayer.

THE PROMISE OF REVIVAL

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the



and cast forth his



as Lebanon. His



shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the



and his smell as



They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the



and grow as the



the scent thereof shall be as the



of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with



I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green



From me is thy fruit found.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS HOSEA 14.

Prayer: Lord Jesus. Thou art the gift of God's love to man and Thou dost also give the Holy Spirit. By this three-fold operation of the Godhead we are assured of the new heart and life. Pour out Thy gracious Spirit that our hearts may be as a watered garden, full of all beauty and fragrance. For Christ's sake. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, About B. C. 727. Flace, Kingdom of Israel. Persons, Hosea to the people of Israel.

Scripture Setting: The Holy Spirit's Work. The Spirit leading, Rom. 8:1-14. The Spirit lighting, John 16:5-15. The Spirit in the Word, 1 Cor. 2:1-16. The Spirit in the heart, 1 Cor. 3:5-19. The Spirit in the churches, Rev. 1:10-20. Christ's spiritual glory, Mark 9:2-13. Spiritual glory, 2 Cor. 3:4-18. The Spirit's conquest, Col. 3:1-17.

GOD'S GARDEN OF THE HEART.

The Heavenly Gardener of the Heart. As you look at that page of beautiful pictures I am sure you must think of a garden, well cared for and fruitful. It is a picture of what God would like the heart to be, for He wants the heart as His garden. He Himself is the Gardener. In the parable of the vine Christ says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the Husbandman," which means gardener. And Paul says, "Ye are God's husbandry," which means garden. There is no picture of the Gardener Himself here-yes, there is, too, for the whole page is a picture of what God can and will do for any heart that will let Him come in. The heart is the soil and He will come in and work it to produce all this glorious beauty and fruitage. He even stands at the gate of the heart garden and knocks and waits that He may

come in. Do you see those three "I wills"-"I will heal," "I will love," "I will be as the dew"? Those mean that God will dig up and cast out the sticks, stones and rubbish from the heart garden; that He will make the soil the very best by His love and grace; and that He will eare for it and water it by the dew of His Spirit, that all the plants and flowers may grow rapidly. If God says "I will" we may be sure that He is able to do all He promises. very last Scripture words on the page are, "From me is thy fruit found," which teaches that God alone in and by Christ and the Holy Spirit can make a heart right and full of good works.

A Heart Garden. A garden-plot of sunny hours God gives me when I wake,

of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life is set forth here, under a variety of attractive figures and pictures. Taking the passage as a whole, we learn, 1. What man is redeemed from. 2. What he is redeemed by. 3. What he is redeemed for. 4. What he is redeemed through. 5. What he is redeemed unto. The picture is suggestive of beauty, fragrance, flavor, fruitage; and all because of the constant and favoring providence of God.

Life and Conduct Setting: The wonderful work

And I can make it bright with flowers All day for His dear sake.

"Breathe on me, breath of God, Fill me with life anew,

"Breathe on me, breath of God,

Until my heart is pure; Until with Thee I will one will, To do or to endure.''

That I may love what Thou dost love.

And do what Thou wouldst do.

Red roses, if my heart is sweet With love for all my own; And heart's-ease springing at my feet For every kindness shown.

And shining, sunny marigold,
If I am brave and bright;
And lilies, for the thoughts that hold My heart all pure and white.

Sweet violets, hiding in their leaves. For truth and modesty And balsams, if a soul that grieves Finds comforting in me.

And poppies, if my toil brings rest To hands grown tired with care; And always-first and last and best-Forget-me-nots of prayer. -Mabel Earle.

Fragrant Beauty of the Heart Garden. The lily picture and the mountain picture both suggest this. Nothing is more beautiful and fragrant than the lily. Its purity and ivory whiteness, with the sweet odor rising from it as a grateful and refreshing perfume, make it the most perfect symbol for this purpose. Of the mountain picture it is said that "his smell shall be as Lebanon." This is very suggestive, for Lebanon was adorned with olive plantations, vineyards and luxuriant fields. There was an abundance of sweet-smelling plants and shrubs, like the myrtle and the styrax. The "cedars of Lebanon" increased the fragrance, as also other aromatic plants. wine picture adds to the idea of fragrance, for it is said that "the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." The olive tree suggests both beauty and fragrance. All this is a picture of what God wants the heart to be and what He will actually make it be. Such a person would have a character that is pure, sweet, true and good, altogether a fragrant life, with a refreshing flavor and beauty to all who came in contact with it. This might stand for that quiet unconscious influence which comes from one who is holy in heart and life.

Beauty of a Godly Life. The olive is one of the most characteristic and beautiful features of all southern scenery. The hoary dimness of its delicate foliage, subdued and faint of hue, as if the ashes of the Gethsemane agony had been cast upon it forever; the gnarled writhing of its intricate branches and the pointed fretwork of its light and narrow leaves, inlaid on the blue field of the sky, and the small, rosy-white stars of its spring blossoming, and the beads of sable fruit scattered by autumn along its topmost boughs, the right, in Israel, of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; and, more than all, the softness of the mantle, silver-gray and tender, like the down on a bird's breast, with which, far away, it veils the undulation of the mountains.—Ruskin.

The Hidden Forces of the Heart Garden. That second picture illustrates this. The roots are most important in all growth, but they are not seen by the eye. The soil also contains some of these mysterious forces and no one can tell exactly how and why the earth and water can put life and vigor and strength into the flowers and plants. By some hidden way that God has planned these silent forces work with countless little fingers. They are more skillful than the hand of any artist, for no man-made painting can ever equal the finished garden or park in its beauty and glory. The roots are the channels or roads, along which these fairy artists travel to do their work; and the trunks and great branches are the roadways above ground. Even when the work is being done, right before our eyes, we cannot see the forces that are doing it all. I heard of a boy who went into the cornfield and lay there watching to see how the corn grew. He thought he heard a slight rustle or crackle as of something in action, but he could not see anything. God works in the heart garden very much that way. A whisper from Him, or a breath, or even a look, will often produce wonders in a heart that is willing and loving. forces often work best when hidden in the night of some dark trial or bereavement. Then God may come nearer even than at other times and graciously and richly bless, making the heart garden more and more beautiful and fruitful.

Wonderful Fruitfulness of the Heart Garden. Nearly all the pictures teach this

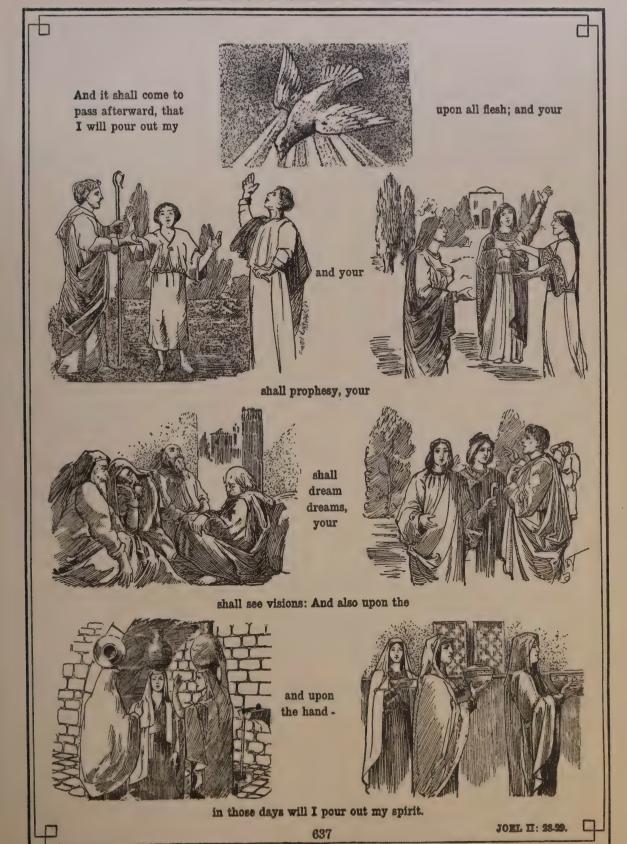
truth; and especially if we call fragrance a fruit. But the olive tree, the corn and the vine are the best symbols of fruitfulness in the strict sense. The olive produces many things for use, principally the oil which was a necessity in many ways. The corn is proverbial as a picture of abounding fruitfulness. The vine surpassed all in its producing power. All these figures are more than matched by the fruitfulness of the heart garden when the Heavenly Gardener has entire charge and care of it. Every flower and fruit in nature's garden may find its likeness and spiritual sister in the graces and virtues and good conduct of the heart garden of God. One must be holy and beautiful before he can act so before others. The last two pictures contrast the false gods with the symbol of the true God. The fir tree sets forth God's love and care as living and enduring through the year and years. Those horrid looking idols have no life, no power. The God of love and grace can and will bring blessing to every heart and life if given to Him. He is just now saying to you, "I will," "I will," "I will." He waits and waits for you to give Him your heart and say "I will" to Him.

Plant Christ in the Heart. We saw in a dime store a box filled with the dried up, shriveled bulbs of what they said were choice flowers. We invested, just in order to see if it could be true that such homely, lifeless-looking roots would ever become fragrant flowers. But sure enough, in a proper soil, and under a genial sun, and moistened by seasonable rains, those unsightly roots grew into fragrant, lovely, blooming hyacinths. Even so our Lord's disciples were shown on the transfiguration mount a gleam of the glorified beauty and deity that was wrapped up in the Man of Sorrows—this apparent root out of dry ground. Plant Christ in the heart and He will make both heart and life beautiful, for He is "Christ in you the hope of glory."—Exchange.

Quiz and Study. 1. What drove man out of the garden of Eden? 2. What garden did Christ suffer in and why? 3. What did Christ say about the lily? What about the barren fig tree? What about the vine? 4. If the flowers were to stand for spiritual traits and graces, how would you name them?

Challenge Text. Create in me a clean—and renew a right—within me. Psa. 51: (f). Fractical Thoughts. 1. Repentance is a returning to God's love, law and service. 2. All worldly power cannot convert a soul or make a spiritual heart garden. 3. God's love is great, as man's need and sin and weakness are great. 4. To the heart that is open to Heaven, Jesus Christ comes as the dew and rain, to revive, freshen, sweeten, beautify and make fruitful. 5. The lite roots are hidden from view and often grow rapidly and wonderfully. 6. The fragrance and flavor of the Christian character are often more effective than the direct Christian work.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS JOEL 2:21-32.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, We thank Thee for the gift of Thy Holy Spirit who comes to carry on Thy work in human hearts and lives. We are but earthly, worldly, sinful, until Thy Holy Spirit quickens and inspires. Come Thou from the Heavenly heights and fill us with Thy grare and power. May we have spiritual tone and vision so that we may see and attempt great things for Christ. Be Thou unto us Guide, Guard and Comforter. For Christ's sake. Amen.

"We are but organs mute, till a master touches the keys-

Verily, vessels of earth into which God poureth the wine;

Harps are we, silent harps that have hung in the willow trees,

Dumb till our heartstrings thrill and break with a pulse Divine."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 800. Place, Kingdom of Israel. Persons, Joel and the people.

Scripture Setting: Need of the Holy Spirit. To prompt praise, Luke 1:46-58. To reveal Christ, Matt. 16:13-20. To give humility, Phil. 2:5-16. To give devotion, Acts 4:7-20. To prompt sacrifice, Matt. 14:1-12. To give consecration, Rom. 12. To give faith, 1 John 5:5-15. To interpret providences, Matt. 10:7-23.

Life and Conduct Setting: A distinction has been made between the purposes of God and His promises. The former are said to be gold in the mine: the latter, gold in the mint and ready for current use. It is discriminating and suggestive; but cannot be held too rigidly. Some purposes are practical promises; some promises are still in the

purpose. This lesson is a case of the union of both. The Holy Spirit is already a gift, and operating in human hearts; He is also promised as a greater gift because of the finished work of Christ. The purposes of God are usually stated in terms of "shall be"; and the promises usually in terms of "is," the present. For example, "All things work together for good" (not shall work); and "My grace is sufficient for thee" (not shall be). The promised Holy Spirit guarantees many and great blessings 1. Vision of God, and joy in Him, vs. 21-23. 2. Gracious and many providences, vs. 24-27. 3. Marvelous ambitions and desires in spiritual things, vs. 28, 29. 4. Revelations of the mysterious and hidden works of God, vs. 30, 31. 5. Glorious and world-wide extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom, vs. 32.

HOW GOD DWELLS IN MAN.

The Holy Spirit as Christ and God. There is a story told of good king Alfred, one of England's early kings that he loved to visit his people in their homes. Many a time he would come to the home of some humble subject, and eat with his family or even stay all night. That was an evidence of his love for his people, and it is quite different from what kings usually do. But this is a far more wonderful story of how God, the King of kings, comes into human hearts and lives. He comes not merely to visit man, but to dwell with him and in him. That is very much more than just coming into the home for a time. That first picture suggests in part how it is done. The dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and it is here shown as coming down to earth and man.

But other very important things were done first; and had to be done before a holy God could live with sinful man. Some plan had to be devised, so that God could still be seen to be holy and just, and yet could be free to dwell in man. As Paul says, "that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Ah, that is it. Jesus was to come and bear the load of man's sin, and so save the honor of God's law; for even God could not save the sinner until His holy law was obeyed. So God planned man's salvation; Christ came and died, thus joyfully carrying out the plan: then the Holy Spirit

came to give man a new nature and dwell in him. This outlines the great work of each God person: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Try the Spirits. The work of the Spirit in the world is to present Christ; to offer Christ to the world. The church of God all over the world is confronting a very subtle peril, that of putting the Spirit of God in a place of prominence that is unwarranted entirely by New Testament teaching. The work of the Spirit is to reveal Christ. The Spirit is the hidden worker making the Christ Himself the supreme and overwhelming consciousness of believing hearts, the one and only Saviour of men who need salvation.—G. Campbell Morgan.

The Holy Spirit In Youth. Now that God can come to the heart of man, we might think He would choose some of the great ones of earth first and dwell in them. But this story prophecy mentions the sons and the daughters first. It says that they "shall prophesy," which means that they will speak many things about God for Him. They could do this only because the Holy Spirit was in them. When Christ came to die for us, He came first as a babe, and so to the youngest and least. It seems very beautiful to think of the Holy Spirit doing likewise. Then, as a youth of twelve years, Christ set an example to all young people by that answer to His mother in the temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Some think it should read, "Do you not

know that I must keep busy in My Father's house." This sets a high standard for youth, in the church, the Sunday school, the prayer-meeting, the Young People's society. The pattern could not be followed at all in one's own strength; and the Holy Spirit comes to youth to enable them to do "as Jesus would do." And if young people are true and loyal in all matters pertaining to the house of God, they will be also in the home, the school and everywhere.

The Case of One Young Man. A young fellow who has since been an untold blessing to China, said: "I know I have the Holy Spirit not because I felt Him come, but because He keeps me thinking all the time about my Lord. I am a business man. If ever I lose touch with Jesus I go into my counting house and kneel down and say, 'Spirit, what have I done to grieve Thee that I have lost the presence of Christ?' and He always restores the presence when I confess.' I said, "You have hit the nail on the head this time; it is not how we get the Spirit, but how we feel about Jesus.'—Meyer.

The Holy Spirit In Man. There are two pictures to illustrate this, the fourth and fifth on the page. One represents the extreme old men, and of them it is said that they "shall dream dreams." It is noticeable that the Holy Spirit does not neglect the old, who may feel that they have passed their useful days. As He comes even to the children, so He comes to the old men. And how considerate and gracious He is to let them rest and dream. We would like to hear one of those dreams sometimes. Then there is a group of young men, and they "shall see visions." A vision is quite different from a dream, for it comes to one who is awake, alert, ambitious and strong. You can almost hear them talk, as they think and plan great things for Christ and His kingdom. Some one has said that "young men are for war," and John said, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." A person who sees a vision feels that that is a call to him to go forth in toil and struggle and sacrifice to make the vision come true. This wonderful prophecy was fulfilled first at Pentecost-a bright picture of spiritual revelation. Later it was fulfilled by the election of a people of God from the Gentiles. Then from time to time, there are fulfillments in part at least, whenever and wherever there are gracious outpourings of the Holy Spirit, like the wonderful revival movement under Moody. There will come a final fulfillment by the return of the Jews, and the evangelization of the world. The Jews were the first to receive the message of salvation, and they are to be the great heralds of it at

the last. Paul tells of this in Romans, chapter 11, when he says, "If the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentles, how much more their fulness?" That whole chapter is a picture of the glorious consummation of all things, and we seem to be coming near to that day of triumph.

The Holy Spirit In Women. Here, again, are two classes, the servant class and the mistress class. Have you noticed that in each of these general divisions, youth, men, women, the ones named first are the least likely to be active and influential. The boy, the old man, and the servant are more promising for one reason or another, than girls, young men and women of influence. The Holy Spirit seems to teach that God is no respecter of persons, except that He specially favors those who are apt to be neglected or overlooked. Paul says that God hath chosen the weak things, the foolish things, the base things, and things which are despised, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." As Christ came to call the sinful and the needy, so the Holy Spirit also works with and for all classes. Look again at all these pictures, and mark how good the faces all seem. These servants seem patient and faithful; the women look holy and beautiful; the young men are bright and active; the old men are peaceful and contented; the boys and girls are joyous and willing. It is all because the Holy Spirit is dwelling in each, and adapting Himself to the condition and need of each. The very last promise is of the abundance of the Spirit, as if by a stream or flood. Then it will come true that "a nation shall be born in a day."

Quiz and Study. 1. Name one thing done by each person in the Godhead for the salvation of the sinner. 2. What reasons can you give to show that the Holy Spirit is a person? 3. How and when did the Holy Spirit appear to Christ? How did He appear at Pentecest? 4. Can you name any or all of the five Seripsure symbols of the Holy Spirit?

Practical Thoughts. 1. The evangelization of the world is certain—"shall come to gess." 2. We have had many object lessons of the Spirit's power—Pentacest, the martyrs, great revivals, remarkable conversions. 3. The Spirit is a person as shown by His being named with Christ and God: also by His doing the works of a person. 4. The common practice of using "it" when speaking of the Holy Spirit betrays ignorance, and greaves both the Spirit and "brist. 5. No the ian consistently plead inability to confees Christ at serve Him, for the Spirit is given to every believer. 6. This wonderful prophecy was fulfilled first at Pentecost: and it is having recented fulfillments. 7. The final victorious result is as sure and given ions as the character of the triume God can make it.

Dz. J. M. Coox.

ISRAEL REPROVED

Seek the Lord, and ye shall live; lest he break out like



of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel. Ye who turn







in the earth.

Seek him that
maketh the



and Orion, and turneth the



into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the



and poureth them
out upon the face
of the earth: The
Lord is his name:
That strengtheneth
the spoiled against
the strong, so that
the spoiled shall
come against the



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS AMOS 5: 1-15.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Show ourselves to us—our sins and needs and utter helplessness. Then may we be moved to see and seek Thy grace. Help us that we may cast down our baser self, and let Thy shining presence come in and glorify the soul kingdom. Thus only can we serve and glorify the Christ King. For His sake, Amen.

Who has this courage thus to look within,
Keep faithful watch and ward, with inner eyes,
The foe may harass, but can ne'er surprise,
Or over him ignoble conquest win.
O, doubt it not, if thou wouldst wear a crown,
Self, baser self, must first be trampled down!

—John Askham

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 800 to 784. Places, Amos lived at Tekoa, and prophesied at Bethel. Persons, Amos to the people of Israel.

Scripture Setting: A Call to Repentance. Need to repent, Matt. 3:1-17. Call to repent, Josh. 2:1-17. Help to repent, Ezek. 18:1-23. A way to repent, Isa. 55:7-13. Welcome to the penitent, Luke 15:11-24. Salvation to the penitent, Acts 3:11-21. Wall of Divine love, Ezek. 33:7-20. Gateway to blessing, Hos. 14:1-9.

Life and Conduct Setting: This is a pre-echo of

Life and Conduct Setting: This is a pre-echo of John the Baptist's great sermon, and also of that by the greater Christ. The text and argument are essentially the same in each case. In this insistent call to repentance we are confronted with the

great facts of life and duty. 1. Repent, for the true God demands it, v. 4. This is more than request; He now "commands all men everywhere to repent." 2. Repent, for false gods avail nothing, v. 5. And not only so, but they shall even be weak and helpless as sinful man himself. 3. Repent and so secure safety and blessing, v. 6. 4. Repent, and thus escape the terrible, threatened judgments, vs. 6, 7. 5. Repent, for God is great, worthy, holy and just, vs. 8, 9. 6. Repent, that you may have temporal and gracious mercies, vs. 10, 11. 7. Repent, and so quit your meanness and live peaceably with all men, vs. 12, 13. 8. Repent, that God may be allowed to fulfill all His purposes in you and through you.

SERMON BY THE FARMER EVANGELIST.

Repent, for God Is a Consuming Fire. Nearly every one has heard of "Billy" Sunday, but many would scarcely recognize him if called Rev. Wm. Sunday. He was a wicked ball player, and after his conversion he became a preacher of righteousness, and was the means of leading thousands and thousands into the Kingdom. His great power was in getting a strong hold of the conscience of men by sermons on the judgment, eternal punishment, and the sovereignty of God. He was an Elijah kind of preacher, who did not fear to face the wicked Ahab; or like John the Baptist, who rebuked the wicked Herod. Amos, the farmer prophet and evangelist, was some such man. called from farm and shepherd life and commissioned by God to warn Israel of sin. This whole sermon is built around the idea of repentance, and so it is quite like John the Baptist's great message, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." That first picture is a striking one, as showing God's hatred of sin and the sinner. "God is love." we know; but this does not mean that He covers up the sin of any or excuses it. Because He is a God of love, He has provided a remedy for sin by the sacrifice of His Son. To any who will not accept salvation by Christ, God must ever remain a "consuming fire," as He is called in Heb. 12:29. The flames seem to have filled the whole house, and to be streaming out at every window; and the people are fleeing in terror.

The Least Sins Judged. The scales for weighing gold in the government offices are so delicately balanced that of two pieces of paper of equal size

and weight, the mere writing of a name on one piece will turn the scales. God's scales of human conduct weigh every least desire or thought, and it is judged accordingly. God is far more exacting than nature or science, as He is far more holy and omniscient.—Exchange.

Repent, for Sin Disappoints and Curses. When people try to get along without God, they make trouble for themselves and others. That judge in the second picture has a good looking face, but his heart must be wrong, because it is said that he "turns judgment into wormwood." By judgment is meant justice, or the rights of those who appeal to him. "Wormwood" is a bitter plant, and means that the wrongs of the judge are hard and severe on the innocent. Now, be sure and get the idea in that beautiful word "righteousness." It means rightness before God and between men. In its beauty and goodness it makes one think of the angel song, "Glory to God; on earth peace and good-will to men." The open book is the Bible, and the glowing torch is the Holy Spirit; and these tell where righteousness comes from. The Scripture story says that the wicked people "leave off righteousness." That would be bad enough; but the real meaning is, that they cast it to the ground, and make it lie there, so that it cannot have any part or influence in earthly matters. This is like the act of a traitor, who would pull down his country's flag, and stamp on it. "Righteousness" is God's beautiful flag, made from the robes of Christ's sacrifice and holiness; and he who casts it down is a traitor to God and all that is good. This is what sin makes everyone do; and only by Christ's coming and dying in man's place can the sin of the traitor be pardoned.

Sin Is Soul Suicide. Man is one thread in the great texture of nature, and he cannot tear himself loose. Caught in this web of moral influences, man goes against nature only to find that nature turns and rends him. He who sinneth against nature wrongeth his own soul. In short, sin is a form of progressive suicide. God hath given men all appetites within, and their appropriate nourishment without, as bounties that are to be richly enjoyed by those who are obedient. But disobey His law at your peril. Hunger is good, but the transgressor is a hungry man who eats red hot coals. Thirst is not sinful, but when thirsty, the sinner drinks scalding water. The bread of obedience is ambrosia, and its wine nectar, but he who sinneth against nature and God wrongeth his own soul.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

Repent, for the Lord Is Mighty and Gracious. One very wonderful thing about the Bible is that a person cannot read it very long before he finds some gracious promises, that shine out like those seven stars shine in the night time. That picture and the next two show God's power, so that He can turn night into day, and make the very destructive waters of the sea to be poured "out upon the face of the earth in refreshing showers." Thus God is able to bring good out of evil and cause all things to work blessing.

When it is urged that we "see Him that maketh the seven stars," etc., it is shown that He has all power, and can grant any blessing. We may come confidently to Him who "rolls the stars along," and "holds the waters in the hollow of His hand," and how unreasonable it is for man, the crown of creation, to be a rebel and traitor, when all else is obedient. The lower world is under obligation to obey only because God created it; man is under obligation to repent and love God, both because God is Creator and Redeemer.

The Right Kind of Repentence. "I got tired lugging that wheelbarrow for grandmother while the was changing her plants," Ned said to his mother, recounting the day's events at bedtime, "and I said: 'I wish there wasn't another speck of this hateful dirt in all the world!' But then afterwards I 'pologized." "I'm glad of that," said his mother. "Did you tell her you were sorry?" "No, ma'am; that is not the kind grandmother likes best," said Ned. "I got another wheelbarrowful and just said: 'Don't you want some more of this nice dirt, grandmother?' And then we were all right again." So God likes a repentance that changes the life.—Exchange.

Repent, for the Lord Delivers and Helps.

Man could not repent, unless God helped him
by His Holy Spirit. When Peter was re-

leased from prison, he preached Jesus Christ to the people, and said, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." That was the very purpose of Christ's coming and dying. This last picture teaches the mercy and providence of God. "The spoiled shall come against the fortress," means that "God can make even the weakest to prevail against the strong." The coupling of the mercy and wrath of God is a common way of appealing to sinful man. It is also a most effective way, for when the terrible punishment of sin is seen and felt the man is more ready to accept the offered pardon. So the very punishment may be said to be a help to salvation. Paul had this in his mind when he cries out, "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God." The blessings we enjoy all call to us to repent; and so also do the judgments and punishments of God.

Penitence the Gateway to Blessing. Whatever may happen we are in God's hands. The flame may scorch; the storm may rage; clouds and darkness may hide the Father's face. The experience of life may make us feel at times that God is not a Father at all, but an impersonal force, and that we could manage the world ourselves more to our benefit, certainly more to our liking. The Scriptures do not say so. They teach exactly the contrary. They tell us that our afflictions are themselves blessings—if we knew all; that our burdens develop our real strength, that when we are weak then, through grace, we become strong. There is another horizon, broader than this. There is a real reward, a complete recompense, a logical, living and perfect realization—a "great" reward in Heaven.

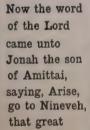
Quiz and Study. 1. By what three words is "repent" described, in most of the ten commandments? 2. What are the twelve "blesseds" of Chist to all who repent? 3. What are the twelve "woes" of Christ to all who do not repent? See Matt. 23. 4. How much of John the Baptist's sermon on "Repent" can you quote?

Challenge Text. "Repent ye therefore and be _____, that your ____ may be ____ out."

Practical Thoughts. 1. Idolatry today also is certain to bring weakness and punishment. 2. The faith preacher or reformer is always opposed by the wicked. 3. Hypocritical and formal worship is worse than none at all. 4. The modern Pharisee also is worse than the modern publican and sinner. 5. Vain and proud Christian work is equally an abomination to God today. 6. Fine churches, eloquent preaching and operatic singing are not acceptable substitutes for heart love and worship. 7. The largest money gift is nothing and worse than nothing, if one has not first given self. 8. The beginning, middle and end of the Christian life is repentance. 9. Repent, repent, repent; and again God says, repent.

Dr. J. M. Coon.

THE STORY OF JONAH





and cry
against it;
for their
wickedness
is come up
before me.
But Jonah
rose up to



unto
Tarshish
from the
presence
of the
Lord, and
went
down to



and he found a



going to
Tarshish:
so he
paid the
fare
thereof,
and went
down



to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord sent out a great



into the sea, and there was a mighty



in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and



the wares that
were in the
ship into the
sea, to lighten
it of them.
But Jonah was
gone down
into the sides
of the ship;
and he lay,
and was fast

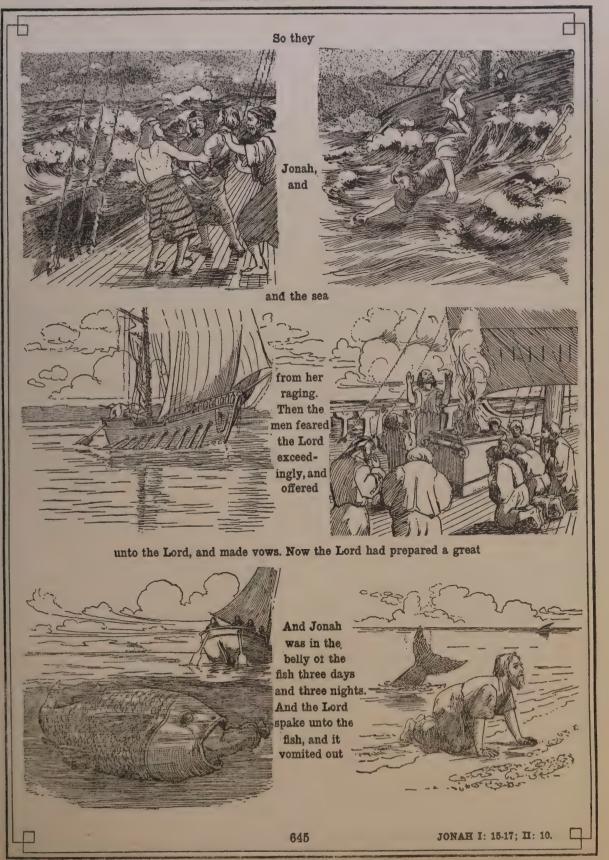


Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men



hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Where fore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.

THE STORY OF JONAH



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS CONTAINED IN JONAH 1 AND 2.

Prayer: Our Father, Help us always willingly and gladly to undertake the duties assigned us by Thee. May we not count the difficulties, but put our confidence in God. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Renew my will from day to day; Blend it with Thine, and take away All that now makes it hard to say, Thy will be done.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. about 780. Place, Joppa, the Mediterranean and the seashore. Persons,

Jonah, the sailors.

Scripture Setting: Study of the Faithful and Unfaithful. Faithful hated but saved, Matt. 10:22. Blessed and promoted, Matt. 24:45. Increase talents, Matt. 25:14-17. In little and much, Luke 16:10. Faithfulness in a steward, 1 Cor. 4:2. Faith-

ful fearless and crowned, Rev. 2:10.
Instances: Abraham, Gal. 3:9. Moses, Heb. 3:5.
David, 2 Sam. 22:22-25. Elijah, 1 Kings 19:10-14. Abijah, 2 Chr. 13:4-20. Jehoshaphat, 2 Chr. 20:1-30. Job, Job 1:21, 22; 2:9, 10. Unfaithful cut down, Matt. 3:10. Lose all, Matt. 13:12. Slay the heir, Matt. 21:33-42. Without oil, Matt. 25:8-13. Hide talent, Matt. 25:24-30. Punished, Matt. 25:41-46.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of this unusual story are: 1. Jonah's misconception of the God he served: Seeking to escape from duty and God's presence by going to sea. 2. God's use of the elements to convict Jonah and declare His presence and power. 3. Jonah's heroic sentence of judgment upon himself to save his fellows. 4. God's unlimited resources and control of His creatures. 5. His miraculous method of preserving, punishing and teaching His prophet. 6. Jonah's prayer for deliverance from his living prison, and God's answer.

A FLIGHT FROM DUTY AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

A Deserter. It is generally agreed that a man who deserts his duty is an unenviable person. One who has enlisted to serve his country in the army or navy and then slips away out of the service is liable to arrest if found, and to imprisonment, and in wartimes may be shot. While society does not have the power to punish for every form of desertion, the act is just as base when one runs away from any kind of duty. Whatever we undertake that is right in itself should be carried through.

Jonah was a prophet who tried to run away from doing what God bade him do. Jonah was a native of Gath-hepher, a village north of Nazareth. He was the son of a man named Amittai. He was a prophet, that is one who spoke for God not merely to announce future events, but to proclaim whatever truth God gave him to utter. He is ranked among the "Minor Prophets," not because he was less inspired than the "Major" or "Greater" prophets, but because the "Lesser Prophets" left behind them smaller books. Jonah may have done a very great deal of prophesying, as it is probable that he did, but his prophecies in general have not been preserved, and so he ranks among the "Minor Prophets."

A Great City. The city of Nineveh was

at that time the greatest in the world and was the capital of the chief world-power of that period. The walls were an hundred feet high, with fifteen hundred towers, and these were broad enough for three chariots abreast. Diodorus Siculus asserted that the circumference was fifty-five miles, and that pastures for cattle and pleasure grounds were included within the walls. Modern discoverers have found the site of Nineveh and have uncovered a considerable portion of its remains, and have revealed to the modern world much of its ancient splendors.

It was to this mighty seat of empire the solitary Hebrew prophet was now ordered to go. To merely travel thither in those days, and especially for one who had little money, was in itself a great task from which many a man would have shrunk. Jonah was not only bidden to go to Nineveh, but to preach there, and not merely to preach to that city or to preach in it, but against it. His was to be an aggressive mission of denunciation. "Cry against it: for their wick-

edness is come up before me."

Jonah Flees. He decided to abandon his office as a prophet altogether, to leave his own people, his land and run away somewhere into the big world outside. The text in the King James version which states that Jonah rose up to flee "from the presence of the Lord," should be interpreted to mean "from being in the presence of the Lord," that is, "from standing in His presence as His servant and minister." Jonah knew, of course, that God is everywhere. He meant to withdraw from the service of Jehovah, thinking that if he went out of the land of Israel the spirit of prophecy would not rest upon him any longer. So he was like every other man who, through love of ease, desire for comfort, fear of men, or such lower motives, gives up his duty and indulges himself in following his own desires.

On the Sea. Jonah went to the seaport, Joppa. Many another man has thought to escape duty by way of the sea. On the sea, one seems to be leaving behind all the ordinary relations and responsibilities of life and entering upon another world. The boy who wants to get away from books and from parental government is apt to think of the sea as a refuge, as a place where he can do as he pleases. Jonah had money in his pocket; and men often think money can help them out of any difficulty. Jonah found a ship in the harbor ready to sail for Tarshish, away off in Spain, and that seemed as far away to men in those days as the other side of the world does to us. Perhaps Jonah had changed his usual garments for such as would not suggest his nationality or his office. He was going to leave everything behind and start life anew. He paid his fare, shipped as a passenger and not as a man who was forced to work his passage. When the anchor was raised and the winds filled the sails and the ship sped out of the Joppa harbor. Jonah felt relieved; there was no journey to Nineveh for him; there was no more disagreeable prophesying. tired. The abrupt tearing away from familiar things had worn on him. The step had been taken. He would now relax and rest, while the boat cut its way through the waves.

The Legend Beautiful tells of the blessedness of doing our duty at whatever cost. A monk was visited by a glorious vision of the Savior, and gazed in ecstasy. It was his task at a certain hour to feed the poor who came then to the monastery. That moment now arrived; he stayed not to enjoy the vision, but went to his humble task. When he returned the vision was still there, and to him the Savior then said: "Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled."

In the Storm. A poet has said, "No exile from himself can flee." No man can run away from himself, from his conscience, from his memories. Jonah was the same man as before, and he was in the same relation to God as before. A mighty tempest came upon the sea, one so unusual and singular that the heathen sailors saw it was different from other storms. They were used to common winds and to high waves, but this tempest was like no other they had known. "The Lord sent out a great wind." Jonah was trying to run away from duty, but God sent His messenger of the wind after him. The sailors were stricken with great terror. Being men of various nations, each one called on his own god, as he had learned to revere this or that heathen deity. Having prayed, they set to work to lighten the ship by casting their wares into the sea.

Still the tempest raged, and the ship threatened to break into pieces. Being su-

perstitious, and having done all they could think of, they decided that the storm might be a sign of the wrath of the gods against some one on board. Wondering which man it could be, they recalled that Jonah had not been seen during the storm. The shipmaster sought him out, found him asleep, shook him, saying, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise; call upon thy god, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." Doubtless Jonah also prayed, yet the storm did not cease. The next thought was, who is the guilty man? They cast lots to decide this, and the lot fell on Jonah. Now they have found the cause of the storm. "Who are you?" they ask eagerly. "What is your occupation? country? people?" Jonah made plain that he was an Hebrew, and a worshiper of the God of Heaven, who had made sea and land, and that he had sinned and was fleeing from God.

Jonah Overboard. The sailors, terrified at the sight of a man who by his own acknowledgment had offended his God, asked what they should do to him. Jonah bravely and manfully, seeing that he had brought this trouble on innocent men, bade them cast him into the sea. Very magnanimously, these men resolved to make further effort before resorting to this measure. They laid hold of their oars, since the sails were useless, and pulled with their might, but they failed to make headway against such a storm. Then, with prayer that God, whom Jonah had offended, would not lay the matter to their charge, they cast the renegade prophet into the sea. Calm settled upon the waters; Jonah had vanished; and the sailors made sacrifice to the wonderful God of Jonah.

Jonah Saved. God did not mean to destroy his offending prophet, but rather to turn him back to duty. Providence had at the ship's side a great monster of the deep and into its opened mouth Jonah vanished. We are told that in the Mediterranean there is a shark or sea dog with so large a throat that it can swallow a man whole. It may have been a creature of this kind that took Jonah into the vast cavern of its interior. There, until the third day, Jonah remained, conscious, praying, awed to find that God was still keeping him alive. Then God interfered again. He spake unto the fish and it cast Jonah out upon the dry land.

An astonished, repentant man, Jonah once more surveyed the dry land. Evidently his plans of sea-going had been a failure. He thanked God for his wonderful deliverance, and turned his face homeward.

Dr. C. D. Wilson.

GOD'S PITY FOR THE HEATHEN

So Jonah arose, and



unto Nineveh,
according to the
word of the Lord
Now Nineveh
was an exceed
ing great city
of three days
journey.
And Jonah
began to enter



a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be



So the



believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sack-cloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he



and he



from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and



in ashes. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

JONAH III: 3-6, 10.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS JONAH 3 AND 4.

Prayer: Our Father. We thank Thee for all the revelations given of Thy love and compassion for Thy children, who are in the darkness of heathenism. We pray that we may have the spirit of

Christ toward them and that we, in love and sympathy, may strive and give, so that the Gospel of light and salvation may be sent speedily unto all men. In the name of Christ. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C., about 730. Place, Nineveh. Persons, Jonah and the king and

people of Nineveh.

Scripture Setting: Study of Revelations Given to Heathen. Abimelech, to keep him from sin, Gen. Pharaoh, to prepare for famine, Gen Balaam, forbidden to curse Israel, Num. 41:1-28. 22. Nebuchadnezzar, of his madness and recovery, Dan. 4:1-18. Belshazzar, of his fate, Dan. 5:5, 24-29. Cyrus, of his mission to build the temple, 2 Chron. 36:23. The Magi, of the star, Matt. 2:1-11. The centurion, of Jesus' power to heal, Matt. 8:5-13. Cornelius, of the acceptance of his alms and the coming of Peter, Acts. 10:1-7.

Life and Conduct Setting. The special features of the lesson are: 1. Jonah, made obedient by his experience in the deep, obeys promptly the second command to preach in Nineveh. 2. The marvelous effect of his spirited preaching in bringing a great city to repentance. 3. God's great mercy in warning Nineveh and then turning from His purpose to destroy the city when they repented. 4. Jonah's inconsistency. Vexed that his prophecy concerning Nineveh is not fulfilled, he reproaches God for extending to 120,000 souls the same mercy that preserved him in the deep. 5. God's patience and forbearance with Jonah and the use of the gourd to teach him his own weakness.

JONAH IS TAUGHT ANOTHER GREAT LESSON.

Jonah did a great deal of thinking after his bitter experience on the sea and in the great fish. That was a matter no man could readily forget. We may be sure he did not need further trials to make clear that it does not pay to run away from a manifest duty. Still there were other lessons he had not yet learned.

On to Nineveh. 'Now Jonah, who had thought by going to sea to escape from hearing any more voices from God, is startled by another message from on high. Perhaps this time it was delivered with a little more emphasis, a little more peremptoriness, with something in the tone that was reminiscent of the past. Part of it was a repetition of the former command, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city." He had heard that before. The concluding words are different, but they suggest what had gone before; "and preach the preaching that I bid thee."

"So Jonah arose." The narrative indicates promptness. There was no hesitation. no dallying. Whether that command came at midnight or in the midst of business, or at the table, it had an immediate and electrifying effect. "Jonah arose." And he went to Nineveh. It was a long journey, full of hardships, unpleasant, but the prophet plodded steadily onward in the direction of that city to which he was commissioned. No soldier ever executed the order of a superior officer more unquestioningly. He does not appear to have indulged in doubts and fears on the way. He went. And he went "according to the word of the Lord," as if he had a commission from a king, signed and sealed, in his pocket, and he had nothing to do but get to a certain place and deliver it.

His Message. When Jonah came in sight of the vast walls and towers and palaces of the mighty city of Nineveh, he was not in the least overawed. He had grown far past that. It would be very difficult to appal a man who had a vivid recollection of having been swallowed by a great fish and carried about in the bottom of the sea and then cast out on land, as he had been. All the armies of Nineveh could not have terrified him. The magnitude of his task did not daunt him, nor the fact that it would require three days to walk around the city or a day to walk straight through it. He came to the walls, passed through a gate and walked on. At first he was silent. He simply marched on and on across that wonderful place, with its huge palaces, its busy traffic, its parks and pasture lands within the enclosure. He was one little man in that great sea of people, and if he had not been sustained by the command of God he would certainly have felt it would be a vain thing for him to try to move that people by his words. He walked on for a whole day, and then he came into the neighborhood of the citadel. At that important point, from which his words would readily be reported to the king, he began to proclaim his message.

Then Jonah cried, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The mere announcement of such a disaster would naturally have a startling effect upon many minds. It would be like a cry of fire. Though no army was in sight; though it was not known that any foe was approaching or threatening, the proclamation of some mysterious and unknown impending danger would awe many. We are to suppose that

these words were only the substance of Jonah's message, and he must have gone into some detail. He must have let it be known that he spoke for God, according to God's command. He must have made it clear that it was on account of the wickedness of the Ninevites that God thus threatened them.

Repentance. Doubtless the news spread far and wide that a strange prophet was announcing the doom of the city. Men must have gathered many times to hear and to discuss what was said. Word reached the king himself that a seer from a far country had appeared in the streets crying out the near destruction of Nineveh. Possibly the king called Jonah into his presence and listened to his awful foretellings. It must have been the work of days rather than of hours for Jonah to be able to reach great numbers of the people with his message. And it must have been with tremendous power of conviction and earnestness Jonah delivered his prophecies. Behind his words were his experiences of God's dealings with himself. So, like flames of fire his words leaped and kindled men's hearts. Then, convinced of the truth of the prophet's words, convicted of the reality of the sins he denounced, a great hope came to palace and cottage that if these sins were repented of and put away God might withhold His destroying hand.

Awed, terrified, penitent, the Ninevites, from king to humblest subject, determined to seek God's pardon. The king left his throne empty, took off his royal robes, put coarse sackcloth on his body instead of linens and silks, and sat himself down among the ashes, as outward signs of his deep repentance. He bade his heralds cry throughout the vast city, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God. Yea, let every one turn from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" Thus all humbled themselves, and the very beasts were covered with the signs of the mourning of the city for its sins.

Repentance Accepted. The great heart of Him who is long-suffering and of great mercy was touched by this penitence. It was their sin He was angered against and not themselves. He rejoiced to forgive. "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them: and He did it not." What a beautiful revelation that is of the kindness and goodness of God. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He cries, "Let the sinner forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him turn unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God who will abundantly pardon."

Jonah Angry. But a certain imperfect man was all this while thinking of himself and of how badly he would feel if his prophecies did not come true. He would rather all Nineveh would have been blasted by the Divine wrath than that one poor little Hebrew prophet should appear to be wrong. God uses very imperfect instruments; otherwise little would be accomplished in the world. The greatest and the best have their mixtures of dross with the gold. Jonah was very angry. He prayed to God, "I pray Thee, Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fied before unto Tarshish;" this was self-deception on Jonah's part; "for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil. There-fore, now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

There is a great gentleness in God's words in reply: "Then said the Lord, Dost thou well to be angry?" They show God's patience with his weak and changeful servant. But Jonah was too vexed to consider a fitting answer. He flung himself out of the city in haste. He chose a place to the east of the city where he could get a good view, at a safe distance, of whatever might happen. He made himself a booth of boughs, and sat in its shadow to see what would become of the city. It was a dread-ful frame of mind for a prophet to be in, longing and waiting for a great city to be overwhelmed.

The Gourd. Then the kind God prepared a gourd and made it grow up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head from the heat. Its rapid growth, its pleasant appearance and its protection delighted the senses of the prophet, and he took a childlike pleasure in it, as many of us are apt to do in small things in hours of weariness and loneliness. The solitary man loved the gourd as a child loves a toy. But God had a lesson to teach His prophet and He prepared a worm, that next day smote the gourd so that it withered.

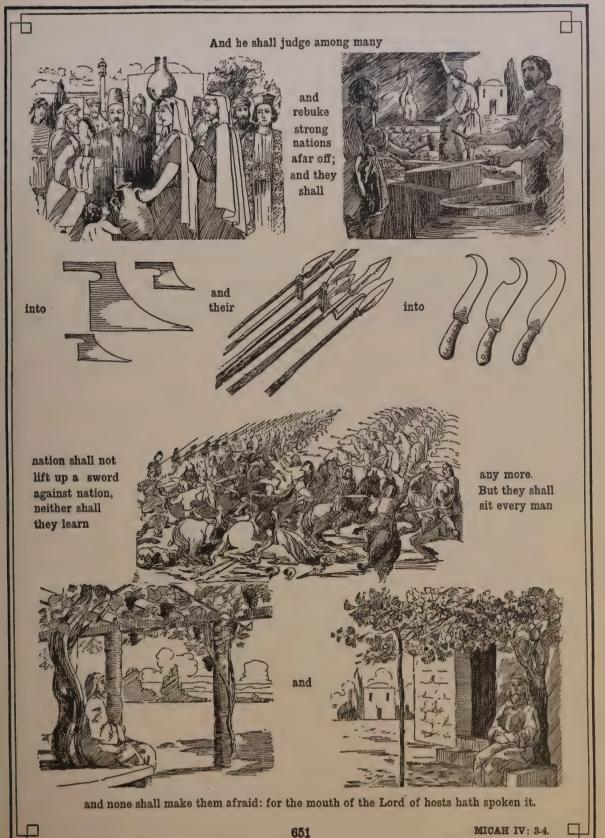
The sun rose that day with a great glare, so that all living things were oppressed. A vehement east wind beat down upon Nineveh and its neighborhood with its hot breath. The leaves had withered from Jonah's booth and the gourd and its vine lay shriveled as by fire. The unprotected head of the prophet was parched by the heat. Body and spirit weakened, and he lay back fainting and wishing for death. Then God said, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" And Jonah declared, "I do

well to be angry, even unto death."
God's Pity. Then God, kind and pitiful toward

Ninevch and wishing likewise to bring His servant to a right frame of mind, pressed home the lesson of it all in the words of vs. 3 and 4, chap. 4.

Practical Truths. 1. We should have hope for all who will repent. 2. We must amend our ways, if wrong, or God will not have mercy upon us. 3. Speak and act according to God's command. 4. Be not impatient, when God is long-suffering. 5. Our pride should be as nothing compared with the salvation of men.

THE KINGDOM OF PEACE



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS MICAH 4.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, What great words Thou hast spoken to haman ears and hearts! Words coined in Heaven, and fragrant with the love of God! The heart looks with joyous wonder on all Thy grace and power. Our faith tries also to grasp the fulfilment of that angel prophecy, "Peace on earth, good will to men." Hasten on the glad day when the wonderful pictures of Thy Word shall be framed in flesh and blood, in all the world.

"Kingdom of Peace, whose music clear Swept through Judea's starlit skies, Still the harsh sounds of human strife Break on thy Heavenly harmonies. Yet shall thy song of triumph ring In full accord, from land to land, And men with angels learn to sing: "Behold, the Kingdom is at hand!""

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 730. Place, In the kingdom of Judah. Persons, Micah to the children of Judah.

Scripture Setting: The Conquests of Peace. World wide conquests, Isa. 61:1-11. Christ a world-king, Luke 2:25-40. Gifts to the King, Psa. 45. Power of the kingdom, Heb. 12:1-13. The conquest power, Acts 2:1-13. Power in and by the cross, Gal. 3:1-14. Let the King come in, Psa. 24. King of kings, Rev. 19:6-16.

Life and Conduct Setting: For authoritative and victorious movement this passage is unsurpassed in the Bible. The King of kings has come to the time of His complete triumph among and before men. There is no hesitancy or circuitous action or

statement. Here are a few of the "impossible" things He accomplishes: 1. Universal expectation among the nations, and a falling into line with His purposes (vs. 1, 2.) 2. Jesus Christ exalted to be judge and arbiter among the nations—even the "strong ones" accepting His rule (vs. 3). 3. The devilish practices of war, centuries old, give place to the mandate of this King of peace, and war is a thing of the past, not even planned or prepared for. That suggestion of Satan, "In time of peace, prepare for war," is silenced forever. 4. Universal safety and prosperity, and consequent brotherhood and fellowship (vs. 4). 5. The correction of all evils, and the ushering in of the millennial day (vs. 5-7).

PICTURE OF A CONVERTED WORLD.

All Nations Changed. Great missionary meetings of the "Laymen's Missionary Movement" were held in seventy-five of the largest cities of the United States. One of the most inspiring features of these meetings were the mottoes adorning the walls where the meetings were held. None were more striking and convincing than these two: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the nations be," and "We can do it, if we will; we can do it, and we will." Do you notice how beautifully these fit into each other? The first is the promise of God that it shall be; the second is the consecrated cry of man to do it. God is the power, and man is the finger tips. In that little great psalm, the 110th, it is said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." A willing people can do all that God wishes and promises. In that first picture you can see persons of many different nations. In the verse just before the Scripture picture in this story it is said, "Many nations shall come and say: Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord"; and "We will walk in His paths." So we know that this will certainly come to pass, for it is said at the bottom of the page of pictures, "for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." We need to remember that all through this story, for here are some great and difficult things promised.

The Purest and Mightiest Religion. The growth of Christianity is one proof of its Divinity. Perhaps Mohammedism grew as rapidly at the outset, but it was spread at

the point of the sword. Perhaps Buddhism has numbered as many converts, but its doctrines were intertwined with confirmed social prejudices and tendencies. Both these religions, and all others that have secured wide following, are indulgent to man's carnal nature. Christianity calls to self-sacrifice, nevertheless it has today an immeasurably stronger and more persistent growth than any other religion. Christianity alone of socalled "faiths" overleaps all geographical limits and lives in all countries. Other plants which the Heavenly Father hath not planted have their zones of vegetation and die outside certain latitudes; but the seed of the kingdom is like corn, an exotic nowhere, for wherever man lives it will grow, and yet it is an exotic everywhere, for it came down from Heaven.-Maclaren.

All Actions Changed. That second picture looks like a blacksmith's shop, and you have looked in one like it now-a-days. The sword on the anvil, and that cluster of spears, could tell many a tale of bloodshed if they had tongues. They may have killed even one's own friend or brother, and they have boasted again and again of the great number of people they have slain. They stand for cruel and wicked actions, and the world has been full of such conduct. They are now changed into "plowshares" and "pruning hooks," as shown in the pictures. These stand for that which will feed and bless the world. The blacksmith shop may make us think of the great providences of God which bring about

such remarkable changes. It is said that He shall "rebuke strong nations." God's purposes have to go right on to fulfilment; and if men or nations get in the way, they will either be destroyed or be changed.

Our Greatest Asset and Exhibit. We show our commercialism, and charm the people of the world thereby, and they flock to our land in search of gold. We make a show of our muscle, and send our athletes to all quarters of the world to contest, and we receive plaudits. We show our patriotism, and fighting power. We send our fleet around the world, and the stars and stripes float upon the breezes of almost every land. From Mukden to Constantinople, from Alexandria to Florence, from the Philippines to Havana, our country made its naval display. But, with all this, we have not shown the very best thing we have to the world.

If we should do so, what would be the result? Why, "He will draw all men unto Him." He is the lodestone of the human heart. He is the magnet of the soul. A sight, a glad shout, and the heathen will crown Christ as King.—Exchange,

All Motives and Spirits Changed. That terrible picture of war in the middle of the page, says as loud as can be, "I will have my way," and "I'll make you obey." It speaks the selfish spirit and purpose, and this has always led to war and bloodshed. But by the wonderful power of this "Prince of Peace," a new kingdom is established, even the "kingdom of peace," and a new kind of subject is dwelling in the kingdom. It is said that "neither shall they learn war any more." This is very different from the condition of things today, when every large nation has to maintain a great army and navy in order to be ready for war. It would seem that only the small and weak nations can be protected from the dreadful ravages of war. But Christ is a Prince and King, and so can bring about these great changes. And He does it by the truth and love and by offering so many blessings that can come only from Him. He wields a sword, but it is the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Power of Love. Christianity is a missionary religion. It is a creed which, twenty centuries after its founder's death, produces missions and missionaries as naturally as a living tree, in whose woody fibres the mysterious forces of spring are stirring, produces blossoms. And the missionaries it produces are of an absolutely unique type. He has the scantiest equipment. He carries no arms; he is clad with no civil authority; he has very little money; he is usually alone. He has only a message and a motive. The message is the story of Christ and the motive is the love of Christ.—W. H. Fitchett.

All Conditions Changed. The last two pictures show the blessings of peace. Instead of needing a standing army to keep off the enemies, a person is altogether safe when alone. The "vine" and "fig tree" suggest

prosperity; and the teaching is that, even when most prospered they are yet entirely safe. Now, if one is prospered in any way, he may be watched and hunted by those who will take away from him his property, his home, and even his life. We can get some idea, even now, of what such perfect security means, by comparing heathen nations with Christian, and by comparing a community with saloons and other wicked places, with another community that is free from such perils and enemies. We all know how pleased everyone will be when these good times come, for even now people like to live in a temperate and religious community. Even saloonkeepers prefer to live in a prohibition district. As we close the story, read again that last Scripture sentence, "for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." If all could really believe that, it would hasten the day of a converted world: by which we mean not that everyone will be a Christian, but that everyone will have a chance to become one by hearing of Christ.

What of Tomorrow?

"Lie still," "Be strong," today; but Lord, to-

What of tomorrow, Lord?
Shall there be rest from toil, be truce from sorrow,
Be living green upon the sward

Be living green upon the sward Now but a barren grave to me, Be joy for sorrow?

"Did I not die for thee?

Do I not live for thee? Leave me tomorrow."

—Christina Rossetti.

Quiz and Study. 1. To what class of prophets does Amos belong? 2. How many in that class, and how many can you name? 3. Give one or more passages of Scripture about "peace." 4. What is the cost of one large battleship, and how many missionaries would that money support? 5. Which is better even as a national protection, battleships or missionaries? 6. Is God with the battleships or missionaries?

Challenge Text. "Lift up your — O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting — ; and the — of glory shall come in." Psa. 24:(1)

Practical Thoughts. 1. "Watchman, what of the night?" "Traveler, the morning cometh." 2. It is man's business to find out God's will, and do it; It is God's business to work out the promised and purposed results. 3. It would be grand if only God could control nations! Well, He can, if we will not blunder in His way and so delay Him in His plans. 4. Emerson is wrong about "hitching our wagon to a star"; better let the golden chains bind us to the throne of God. 5. Wrong again are these war demagogues who propose to help out the Almighty with battleships and armies! 6. Every believer, by that very fact, is under obligation to advocate world conquests by peace; and to believe that it is feasible and practicable. 7. Did you think peace was a negative quality? No, no, it is the mightiest force in the universe; and therefore we talk of the conquests of peace.

DR. J. M. COON.

POWER THROUGH GOD'S SPIRIT

And the angel that talked with me came again, and



as a man that
is wakened
out of his sleep,
And said unto me,
What seest thou?
And I said,
I have looked,
and behold



all of gold, with a



upon the top of it, and his



thereon, and



which are upon the top thereof: And



by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the



saith the Lord of hosts.

that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying,



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ZECH. 4.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thou art wondrous in the work Thou hast done for sinful man. Wondrous also, in the way Thou dost work. By the silent and mighty forces of Thy Holy Spirit Thou art ruling in human hearts and conquering the world. May every part of our being respond gladly to Thy call and love, and so may we become the marvelous proofs of Thy power. For Christ's sake. Amen.

"Who from unsightly bulb or slender root
Could guess aright
The story of the flower, the fern, the fruit,
In summer's height?
Through tremulous shadows voices call me,
It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

—J. R. Miller, D. D.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 519. Place, Mt. Moriah, in Jerusalem. Persons, The angel, Zechariah, Zerubbabel, the two anointed ones.

Scripture Setting: A Study of the Holy Spirit. He is a Revealer, 1 Cor. 2:1-10. He is a Guide, John 16:7-15. He is a Quickener, Ezek. 37:1-14. He is a Helper, Rom. 8:14-27. He is a Comforter, John 14:16-26. He gives power, Acts 2:1-13. He is in the believer, 1 Cor. 3:5-19. He calls and pleads to the end, Rev. 22:10-17.

Life and Conduct Setting: This picture vision

of the golden candlestick invites a study of the Holy Spirit, who is the light of truth. 1. The Holy Spirit must be spiritually discerned (vs. 1). 2. He works through the church and Christian (vs. 2). 3. He alone is the sufficient power to do the great work assigned (vs. 2, 3). 4. He is specially and gloriously revealed to those who seek Him (vs. 4, 5). 5. He is mightier than any human force or agency (vs. 6, 7). 6. He uses, honors, and glorifies human agents (vs. 8-10). 7. He sees, adjusts, controls, unifies all persons and things, to work out His purposes.

GOD'S WAY OF BUILDING UP HIS KINGDOM.

The Holy Spirit Works Through Man. One of the most wonderful structures in the world is the splendid statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World," in the New York harbor. It is a mammoth figure of a woman holding aloft a torch in her right hand. Some idea of its great size may be had from the fact that a man can climb up the wrist by an inside stairway, and go out to the fingers and actually enter the little finger. All the rest is in fine proportion, and it is very striking and commanding. But it is all for the purpose of holding aloft this lighted torch to represent "Liberty" giving light and freedom to the whole world. It is all very suggestive of God's way of working His purposes in the world: and especially the way of His mastering difficulties, caused by sin and Satan.

Just then was a time of very great perplexity and difficulty in connection with the building of the second temple. Zerubbabel the governor, and all the people were discouraged. God graciously came to Zerubbabel, with a message of hope and victory, as shown in that first picture. The angel tells him that "the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you." (vs. 9.) God's Spirit works through man, and the first thing He does is to encourage and comfort. Notice that phrase "came again," for it teaches the great truth that God keeps coming and pleading with His people to be faithful and consecrated. Then to increase man's interest, the angel asks him what he sees.

A Power Greater Than Edison's. The enormous force generated by this brilliant man is seen in the fact that his inventions and those which he has materially assisted have given existence to indus-

tries capitalized at more than \$7,000,000,000,000, and earning annually more than \$1,000,000, while they find employment for half a million people. Even these stupendous figures do not cover the facts, for no figures can begin to indicate the value of the service Mr. Edison's inventions have rendered to mankind. And yet any believer may have and use a far greater power than that of this wonderful magician. A Moody or a Spurgeon is an illustration of what the Holy Spirit can do through one man.—Exchange.

The Holy Spirit Works Through Light. That torch of the Liberty statue harmonizes beautifully with the light of this golden candlestick, and the seven pipes carrying oil to the lamps. But this light stands for a liberty from sin and from the power of Satan. There is nothing that sin and Satan fear so much as light. They both love darkness, and do their worst work in the dark. But God is light, and Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. The Holy Spirit kindles the flame in the heart of the Christian and in the church. The "candlestick," which is the light-bearer, is of gold; and this means that the Christian and the church should be pure and holy, so as to give forth the light in the best way. They are made holy by trusting in Jesus Christ as Saviour. What natural light does for the physical world, Jesus Christ does for the soul, mind and spirit of men. He said to His people, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." But light is not only an enemy of darkness, but it is the service of life, beauty, radiance, health. warmth, purity, joy, comfort, power. Are these not splendid forces to have? And with them one can master all difficulties. They are all in God's message of life and light.

The Holy Spirit Works With Christ and God. We do well to get firmly in our mind the fact that all three persons in the Godhead work together to establish their kingdom in the earth. God the Father plans the work, and in love and wisdom makes it all possible; God the Son carries out the plan by coming to the earth, taking human form, and dying on the cross; God the Holy Spirit convicts man of his sin, reveals Christ as a Saviour from sin, and persuades man to turn from sin and accept Jesus Christ. It is very important to remember that the work of each is vitally related to that of the others, and to some extent determined by that of the others. For example, the love of God for the sinner can be manifested only by and because of Jesus Christ's death. God's general love, like giving sunshine and rain, is exercised towards all men everywhere. But His love of joy and approval can come only to those who have accepted Christ as a Saviour. So it is with God as a Father. He is the Creator-Father of all persons; but He is the Redeemer-Father, or a real spiritual Father, only to those who come to Him by faith in Christ. To those who reject Him Christ said, "Ye are of your father the devil." Many other important distinctions will be seen by always keeping the work of the three Divine persons clearly in mind.

The Constant Co-operation. The engineers who directed the work of the Hoosac Tunnel started two gangs of men from opposite sides of the mount. So accurate was their survey that, when they met midway in the mount, the walls of the excavation, approaching from the different starting-points, joined within less than an inch. The practical working of the bore proved the scientific accuracy of the survey. Man starting from the side of human need, reaching upward toward God, is met by the revelation in Christ coming down from God, a revelation that exactly fills his need. This perfect match between the human need and the Heavenly supply is the perfect proof of the Divine origin of the Bible and the exact co-operation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in redemption, in prophecy and assurance that all will be fulfilled as promised.—G. F. Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit Works Victoriously. How could it be otherwise? The full name of what may be called the Gospel firm, that has undertaken to build up Christ's Kingdom in the world, is God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, and church. That firm can do any right thing it wishes to do. The only reason it delays or fails for a time is because

the earthly member of the firm shrinks or balks or is indifferent. A preacher once asked a traveling man about his firm and his line of goods. Then he said, "I also am a traveling man." The drummer inquired the name of his firm, and the preacher replied, "I travel for Lord, Church and Company." That is the same as the full name we gave above. Here are four impossible things which this firm can do: impossible, I mean, from the standpoint of the world. It can save a man from sin and make him holy in character; and man anywhere, even the very worst. It can make an efficient and successful worker of every saved person-no matter how poor, ignorant, young or obscure. It can destroy any work of the devil, like intemperance; and it can defeat and master the devil himself. It can evangelize this whole world in the present generation. These four things this firm can do easily and almost immediately if—if—if that earth member of the firm were willing. But it cannot very long prevent the Heaven members of the firm from final victory. If one church or one Christian will not help then other churches and Christians will be found; "for Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

The Universal Kingdom. "In the early settlement of California by the Spanish, the natives related that the great cross, planted by Portala, would grow at night till its point rested among the stars, glistening with a splendor that outshone the sun." This is mere superstition; but not so when we refer this language to the cross of Christ. Its top has entered the heavens; its arms are outreaching to the ends of the earth; it is God's standard by which He lays claim to the kingdoms of the world, which "shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."—Exchange.

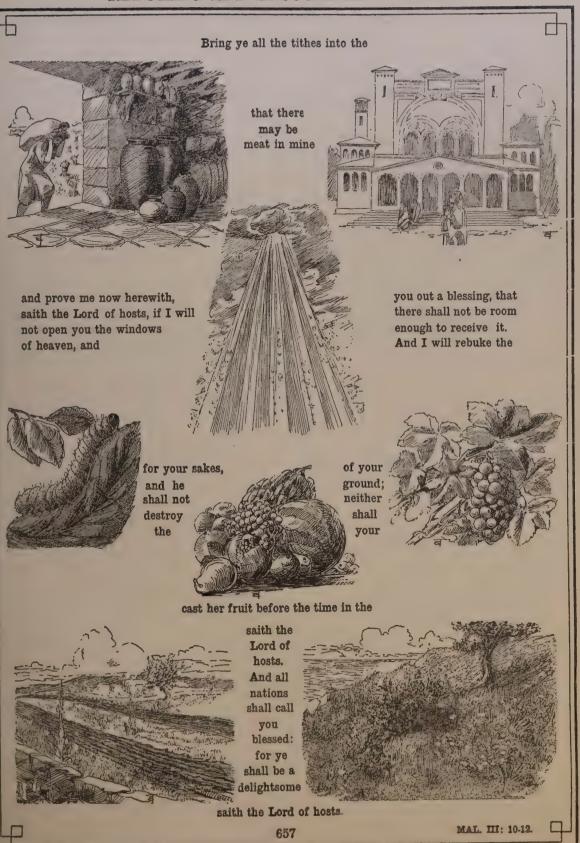
Quiz and Study. 1. To what class of prophets does Zechariah belong? 2. How many in that class, and how many can you name? 3. What is the other class called, and how many and who are they? 4. When did the golden candlestick stand in the tabernacle?

Challenge Text: And they were all —— with the Holy Spirit, and began to —— with other ——, as the ———— gave them utterance. Acts 2. (?)

Practical Thoughts: 1. God's day, God's house, God's book, God's people, God's Spirit are the five great forces in spiritual work. 2. The many gracious providences of life are so many angels trying to waken us out of sleep. 3. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can reveal Christ and all spiritual mysteries to us. 4. How much we plan and toil, and sacrifice to do things in our own strength. Try God's way by prayer. 5. Every right work has a prophecy of triumph in it, and has the forces and resources by which to triumph.

DR. J. M. COON.

REBUKING AND ENCOURAGING JUDAH



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS MALACHI 3:1-18. READ CHAP. 1.

Prayer: Our Father, Grant us wisdom that we may discern the Divine law of benevolence and act upon it. Thus may we indeed receive Thy blessing. In the name of Christ. Amen.

"The faith of the Head Is the faith that is dead; The faith of the Heart Is better in part; "But the faith of the Hand Is the faith that will stand, For the faith that will do Must include the first two."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, about 420 B.C. Place, Jerusalem. Person, Malachi.

Scripture Setting: A Study in Tithing. Paid by Abraham, Gen. 14:20; Heb. 7:1, 2. Jacob pledged, Gen. 28:22. Law of, Lev. 27:30-32; Deut. 14:22, 29, 30; Deut. 26:12-14. Brought into God's house, 2 Chron. 31:11, 12; Neh. 10:37; Neh. 13:4, 5, 12. Of all things, 2 Chron. 31:5. Christ's views concerning, Matt. 23:23. Systematically, 1 Cor. 16:2 Rewarded, Prov. 3:9, 10.

Life and Conduct Setting. 1. The evils inflicted on Israel are traced to neglect of God's ordinances. 2. An opportunity to return is offered. 3. This will be accompanied by the removal of the evils. 4. The special wrong against God has been withholding of tithes. 5. God had withheld harvests because of their guilt. 6. Unless the whole of the tithes were paid they were guilty of defrauding God. 7. They were invited to put God to the test. 8. The point to be tried was not whether God would keep His promises, but whether He was a righteous Being. 9. The result of the test would show in what relation He stood to them and would demonstrate His goodness.

A WONDERFUL VOICE.

The man who uttered these beautiful words is only a voice. History has been ransacked in vain to discover his home, his parentage, his personal appearance, his business, the date of his birth, or his death. Tradition has preserved for us beautiful guesses as to this mysterious personality: such, for example, as that he was Mordecai, Nehemiah or Zerubbabel, and even that he was an angel of Heaven! But nobody knows. Nothing of all that rich and wonderful life has survived but these few undying words, and the man himself is hidden in the past as the English skylark is buried in the depths of the heavens or our American thrush in the depths of the woods, when singing their melodies divine. Only voices! But such voices!

Listen then to a voice that for twenty-five centuries has been singing out of the dim past a song so noble and so sweet that it cannot possibly die away! The song of the skylark and thrush die away; but little children born ten thousand years after you have grown old and die will hear this same mysterious voice singing his wonderful, wonderful song, and when they try to see the man, will hear their mother say, "The man is but a voice!" Hush, then, and listen to its words.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the store house * * and I will pour you out a blessing,"

It was four hundred and twenty years before the blessed Babe was born in Bethlehem that these words were uttered, and if you care to know what made the singer sing them, you shall hear. The children of Israel had returned from their captivity in Babylon, rebuilt their homes, and reëstablished their institutions. Once more the priests in the temple performed the sacred acts of sacrifice and prayer. Once more the people brought their offerings to God's courts, and then they fell away again. Doubts of God's providence crept into their hearts. loved, too well, the money which they earned and the pleasures they enjoyed. The temple was forsaken for the mart of trade and places of amusement. The tenths of their incomes were no longer poured into the treasury. The work of the church was arrested. Vices sprung up. Sin abounded. Punishment followed. The land was devastated. Poverty and wretchedness were everywhere. Nobody cherished hope and nobody saw a light. When suddenly, out of the stillness of apathy, the wonderful voice was heard. Astonished, awed, inspired, the people listened. "Return unto Me and I will return unto you. Bring ye all the tithes into the store house-and prove Me whether I will not pour you out a blessing!"

It was like the crowing of the chanticler announcing dawn! It was like the music of an army advancing to relieve a city of its siege. It was like the voice of a lake; of a thunder! The despairing men looked up from their furrows and the hopeless women from their homes and mills. "What!" they exclaimed, "Is that the only trouble? Is it because we have forgotten God that all these miseries have come upon us? Is it only necessary to remember Him and serve Him; to pay our vows and our tithes, to recover the lost joy and blessedness of our lives?"

Yes—that was literally all! And it is so today, it will be so tomorrow, and forever-

"Prove Me," says God to man, through

the voice of His prophet, "and see whether it is not true that I love and will bless you." Turn about is fair play. And God, who brings us into the world to test us, implores us also to put Him to the proof. "Try me, and see whether all that I declare and promise are not true." He beseeches. In that fact lies the glory of religion and the hope of humanity. Christianity is a practical philosophy of life. The God whom it reveals can be put to the test of benevolence and faithfulness as if He were a man. If you wish to know whether He exists, seek and you shall find Him. If you wish to discover whether He is opposed to wrongdoing and in favor of right living, you have only to try the one or the other on Him.

If you wish to know whether He will hear and answer prayer, you have only to pray in humility and sincerity. "Pragmatism" (in the most recent phraseology of philosophy) means practicability. It means the discovery of the value of any theory of life by its workableness. Will it work? Well, if it will work then it must be true, and the truer it is the better it will work. By that law we are willing to try our holy faith and we know that it will stand the test. Christianity is a workable theory of life. Any man or church, or nation, that wishes to know whether God is the sort of Being which the prophets, the Saviour, and His apostles proclaimed, have only to discover by actual experiment. Believe this! Believe in the

moral earnestness of God!

"There Shall Not Be Room to Receive It." Did you ever realize that your dissatisfaction with life grows not out of its emptiness and impoverishment, but out of your incapacity to receive and contain its richness? God pours you out blessings, which your little pint cup of a soul cannot hold! Not one person in ten thousand possesses the necessary powers of appreciation. If you had a cellar full of gold and did not know what it was, you would fill the world with clamor because God had not given you wealth! If you are deaf, it makes no difference whether the air is full of music or not. You shriek out your complaints of the lack of harmony in the world just the same. I have received and so have you innumerable gifts from God, which we had no talent for comprehending. Give a fine watch to a baby and it will put it into its moist little mouth to suck! Lack of appreciation; it has no room to hold it! I know husbands who have wives, and wives who have husbands, and parents who have children, who do not know

their value. They have no room to hold them! There you have the trouble with nine-tenths of the miserable, dissatisfied, complaining people who believe that they live in the worst possible of worlds. God opens the windows of Heaven and pours them out floods of blessing: but they haven't a cistern, a barrel, or even a bucket, capable of holding His gifts.

"Bring Ye the Whole Tithe Into the Store House." There is but one way of putting God to the proof. It is, in brief, to fulfill all the conditions of existence. Do his will and you shall know His doctrine, His nature and purpose. One of the conditions is that of benevolence, of consecration, sacrifice. It it a Divine law that we must give back to the Giver some portion of His gifts to us. There are those who think that portion is known and is absolute. It is a tenth, they say. At any rate, this much is certain: Whatever portion belongs to God must be given to Him in full. "Bring ye the whole tithe!" We do not fail so much in not giving large amounts as in not giving all we promise. We withhold a part of what we know we owe. We take a "rake-off" from our benevolences, setting aside a part of our time, our money, and our service, only to cut it down and shave it off. No one, however, can know the mind and heart of God who does not pay all his yows and bring his whole tithe into the storehouse.

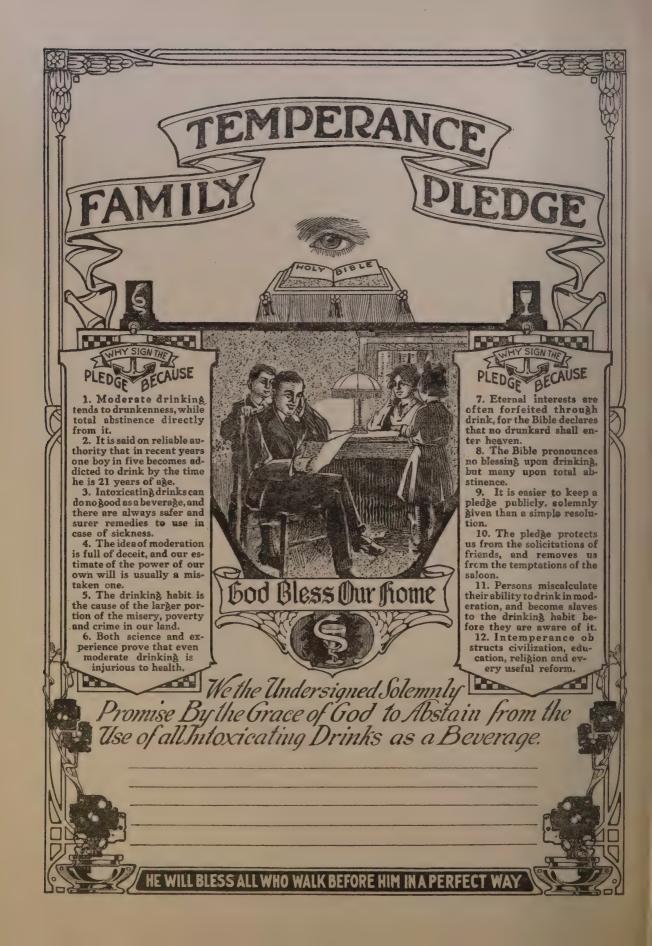
"I Will Rebuke the Devourers." The devourers! We should get on pretty well if it were not for the devourers! There lay the terrible peril of these Jewish people. On every hand were the devourers! The armies of their enemies devoured their homes and barns. The locusts, caterpillars and insects devoured the crops in their fields. The tax-gatherer devoured their savings. Their vices devoured their virtues. Everywhere, everything bad seems trying to eat up everything good and we modern men and women are victims of the devourer like those of old. Our time is devoured by trivial duties and cares. Our attention is devoured by insignificant objects and interests. Our spirits are devoured by ambition, avarice, lust of pleasure, pride. What is it that devours you? Envy, bitterness, revenge, care, worry? Nothing is more terrible than to see people being devoured by little insect vices! It is like watching a great elm tree being eaten up by caterpillars.

"And All Nations Shall Call You Happy." It is a beautiful thing about happiness that its self-dis-closure is inevitable. If you are happy, it will be known! All nations shall call you happy! There is an aroma of joy that is more permeating than that of musk. Soul-gladness diffuses itself like light.

"What is it that makes you so happy, Mandy?" a lady asked her old colored servant. "Lawdy, Missus, I don't let nothing bother me. I jes' weah this old worl' lak a loose fittin' gyahment," she said. Learn to do that and you will be a delightsome person whom everybody will love and call happy.



TEMPERANCE LESSONS FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS





DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN BY BRITON RIVIERE

Darius, king of Persia, made many princes rulers of different parts of his kingdom. Over them he set three presidents, of whom Daniel, a Jewish prophet, was first. Daniel had performed many miracles and commanded the admiration of everybody. But the Persian officials were jealous of Daniel, seeking to destroy him, and knowing well that it was only through his religion, and the prejudices of the king, that this could be accomplished. So the king was persuaded to set up many graven gods, with orders that everybody, without exception, should worship them and should pray to none other. But Daniel prayed to the God of Israel, where he could be seen, and therefore was arrested. The penalty was that the offender should be thrust into a den of lions. So, the king, regretfully, ordered this punishment for the Jewish prophet, hoping that the God of the Israelites would protect him. Daniel was miraculously saved from the lions, and having been drawn out of the pit, his accusers were thrown in and at once torn to pieces by the savage animals.

This picture of Daniel among the lions was painted by an Englishman, named Riviere, whose special talent has been manifested by studies of wild animals, especially of lions. In this bare chamber marked by the rigid, heavy stone in the walls Daniel stands erect, dignified, and with his hands bound behind his back. His straight figure contrasts strikingly with the undulations and writhings of the lions. One lion, the king of the den, stands erect but hesitating, his eyes full of wild surprise, and still he makes no attack. Another great animal crawls on his abdomen, showing his teeth; but still making no attack. There is a very old beast who looks on questioningly, and so they cringe and snarl, but let Daniel alone.

Such an expression of animal fierceness controlled by the calm, bound man is immensely impressive. This talented painter has many times painted these great beasts in various conditions and positions until his reputation is worthily great.

-JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON

DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS

After Briton Riviere's painting by Jan Bralings.



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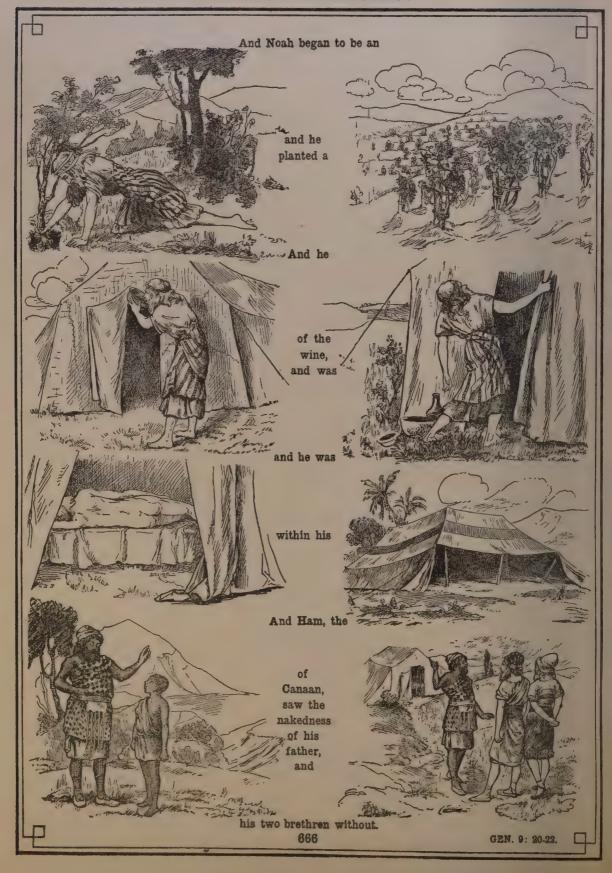
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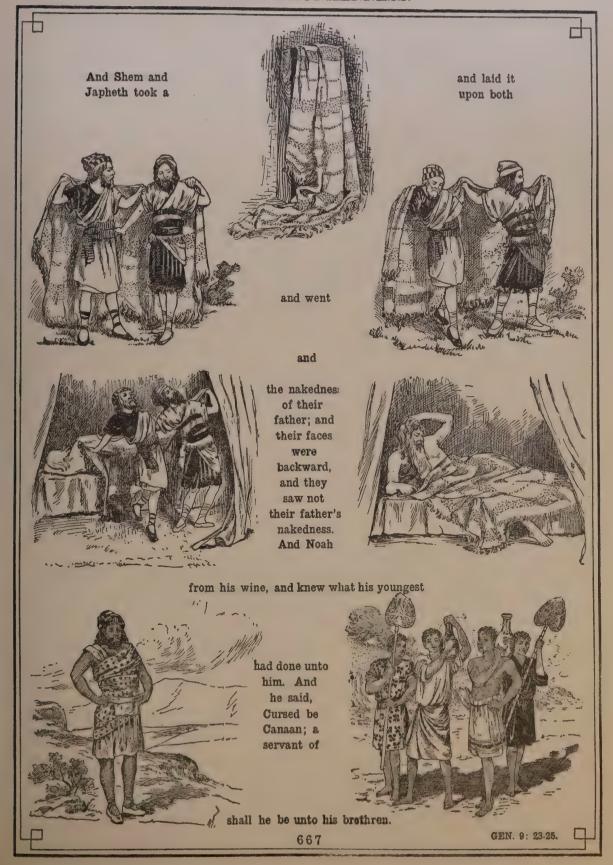
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NOAH'S DRUNKENNESS.





THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS GENESIS 9:20-27.

Prayer: Lord, May we every day obey the command to watch and pray. Do Thou save us from the sin of drunkenness. For the Savior's sake. Amen.

This our pledge secure, We'll never, never touch the wine, We'll drink cold water pure.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 2348, directly after the Deluge. Place, Armenia (a hill in the northwest, adjacent to the great Ararat, is designated as the region where Noah planted his vineyard). Persons, Noah, his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and Canaan, Ham's son and Noah's grandson.

Scripture Setting: Wine, Eph. 5-18. Duty to parents, Ex. 20-12. Disrespect to parents, Deut. 27:16. Charity for others' sins, Gal. 6:1. True source of happiness and prosperity, Psa. 144:15. True aspiration, Heb. 11:16. Oneness of all believers as betokened in the blessing of Shem and Japheth, Eph. 3:6.

Life and Conduct Setting: We have 1. the sad

story of the fall, through wine, of a man renowned for righteousness, obedience to God and sublime faith. 2. The misconduct of a son and grandson and the filial charity of Shem and Japheth. 3. The awakening of Noah to his condition, and his prophetic vision of the consequences of his weakness and Ham's and Canaan's sin, with a realization of the reward which shall come not only to Shem and Japheth, but their descendants. 4. The lesson shows us the weakness of human nature at its best and its proneness to sin. 5. The power of strong drink to overcome even the best of men, is set forth and the consequences of a good and an evil heredity are fully shown in the curse and blessing.

HOW A GOOD MAN ERRED.

Righteous Noah. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation." He was one of the few patriarchs of whom it is said he walked with God and held converse with the Almighty; a man so superior to all the men of his times as to be held in remembrance by Jehovah. "God remembered Noah," and made a covenant with him. Surely, if it were possible, as the champions of so-called moderation declare, we have here a man who could use wine as one of the "gifts of God" and not abuse it, to his own harm and that of posterity. We shall see if the moderate drinker is safe.

Little Foxes. When the whole earth was filled with impurity, Noah was above the temptation of lust. When all the world was against him, Noah faced its sneers, and continued at the task God had assigned him, and never yielded to the temptation of disobedience: when "cribbed, cabined and confined in the ark," with no sign from God, while the world disappeared from sight, Noah withstood the temptation of doubt. But in the midst of his own vineyard, among his own family, Noah falls. It is comparatively easy to live aright before the public, to deport oneself nobly under great temptation, but the daily life in the house is the true test of holiness. The man who commands the admiration of his children, the child who holds the respect of brothers and sisters, is the real hero. The smaller temptations are the most effectual. Great temptations are met and vanquished in the open. Small temptations steal upon one like an assassin and defeat one unawares. They are the "little foxes that spoil the vines."

Watch and Pray. Alone in an evil generation, Noah had been drawn to God for companionship. He must come to God daily and hourly to receive measurement and plans for the Ark. Only by faith could he endure the flood, but the waters had disappeared, the bow of the covenant had been set in the sky, and he was no longer in circumstances so difficult as to drive him continually to God. Only by living close to God, by bringing Him into all the little things of life, coming to Him with our least temptations, may sin be resisted. A man is never certain of himself. There are dormant and unsuspected germs of evil in every nature, ready to spring into fruitfulness under the slightest temptation. Nothing can keep us from falling into sin except the Master's direction, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

New Development of Sin. Noah planted a vineyard. Noah saw what sin had wrought in the destruction of a world. The old world and its inhabitants, its wickedness, had been washed away in the flood. It was a new world which Noah looked upon, and he and his family were to determine the future. Alas, that the one who had survived such great evil was to introduce into this fresh new world that which was to be the source of greater evil still! What a train of evil, misfortune and woe has sprung from Noah's vineyard! Not a nation or commonwealth, not a city or town, and hardly a home, but has suffered from it.

A Drunkard's Shame. What a sorrowful spectacle—the righteous and rescued Noah lying drunk on his tent floor! "In that heavy, helpless figure, lying insensible in his tent, is as significant a warning as in the flood." Lust floods in, in the wake of intoxication. Noah lies uncovered, exposing himself contrary to the law of modesty. Im-

purity is the twin sister of drink, and the saloon often lures its victims through impure pictures, sensuous music and bad books.

Wine a Mocker. Noah is not the only great and good man deceived by wine. The just Lot; Nadab and Abihu, priests of God, all erred through wine. It is a pathetic fact that a roll call of wine's victims would include the names of some of the wisest, most generous and biggest-hearted men in the world, destroyed by it. No will is strong enough to overcome this mocker, no brain great enough to withstand its attack, and no character so noble but it may fall before it. The only safety lies in total abstinence from all forms of intoxicating liquors.

Behavior of Sons. Ham's conduct was at first indifferent. No sorrow over his father's shame was manifest. He neither turned away nor covered his eyes. Such indifference betrayed a heartlessness appalling in a son. Then he told it to his brothers without. This was utter shamelessness. Learning of their father's pitiable and disgraceful condition, the other two sons, obedient to the great command with promise, seized the first robe at hand, spread it out and went backward, and with averted faces covered the nakedness of their father. Even the misconduct and unworthiness of a parent does not relieve a child from the obligation of the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Christly Attitude Toward the Sinner. The One who was in every way tempted as we are, and yet without sin, sees deeper into the hearts of the erring than any fellow sinner. "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," was the tender admonition of Christ. The attitude of men toward the sins of others is a test of character. The reluctant exposure of sin, that good may come, is quite different from the publication of sin in gossip, for the amusement of others. Are not those who find pleasure in the sins of their fellows, who witness immodest plays in the theater, gloat over the criminal news in yellow journals, and choose those books whose plots are founded on crime or indecency, like Ham? Charity covers a multitude of sins. Each one of us is so liable to fall that we should see in another's fall a warning to ourselves, "Let us remember that life is a battle against sin; its victories recorded in Heaven, its defeats manifest on earth." Where no good can be done by talking them over, let us cover the faults, mistakes and sins of others as did the two sons of Noah their father's sin.

The Awakening. Noah awoke from his wine, and knew. Restored consciousness brought a sense of his humiliation. Noah had sinned but once. Alas, for the awakening of those whose whole lives have been spent in sin! Noah partook of wine under conditions exalted by advocates of the moderate use of alcohol. He began as a moderate drinker. We may reasonably infer that this was the first instance of complete intoxication. He did not frequent a public drink-

ing place, but drank in the home; the wine was not adulterated, but pure juice of the grapes from his own vineyard; but what disastrous results! A saint of God in a drunken debauch, humiliated by his own son and grandson. The hereditary effects of the father's weakness were now manifest in Ham's unfilial, unfeeling conduct and Canaan's sinful, shameless insult. Of all agents, alcohol is the most powerful in establishing an evil heredity. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes quaintly says, "We are omnibuses in which our ancestors ride."

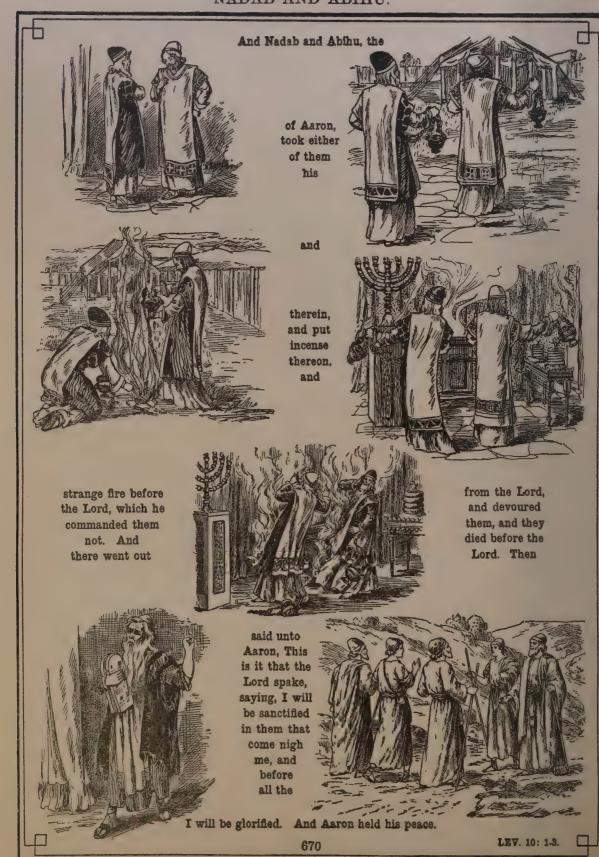
A Curse and a Blessing. Noah had sinned in a sottish, bestial way, but the patriarch who had looked to God for help in all the perilous days of the flood, who had read the bow of promise in the sky, knew whence to seek help in his own degradation. In that awful moment of awakening, a cry for pardon and restoration must have gone up to Noah's God, or else the spirit of prophecy would not have come upon him in which he gave utterance to a curse and a blessing. There had been an act of mockery or abuse which Noah knew Canaan had done to him, so the curse falls upon the grandson, whom Noah calls his youngest son, according to the custom of that day, by which all a man's descendants are like sons. Noah's prophecy was not the angry and excessive wrath of an outraged father, but a prophetic vision of the future. It does not even require a prophetic vision to foresee misfortune following evil, and advancement, honor and supremacy as the reward of righteousness. Ever and always, before and since Noah's time, it has been exemplified in the history of the rise and fall of nations and in the lives of individuals.

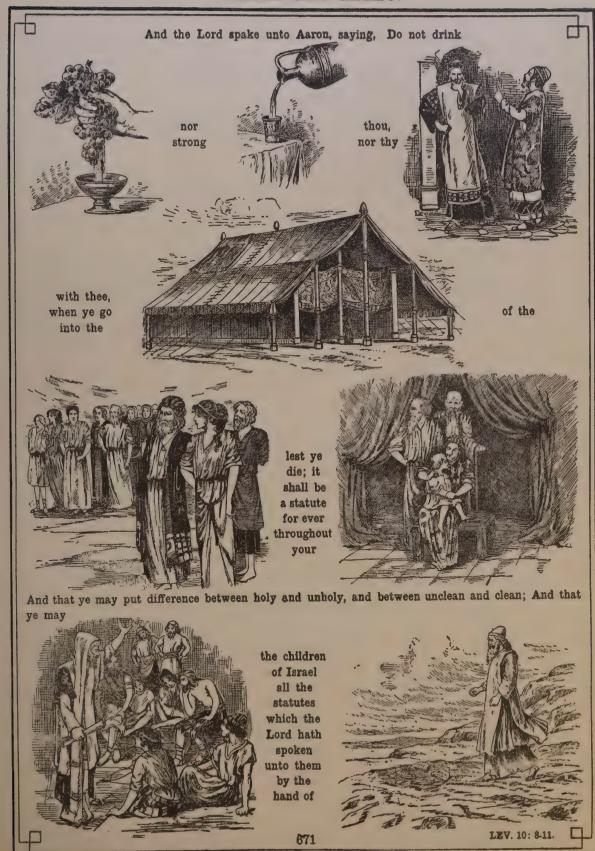
Quiz. 1. What caused Noah's fall? 2. What other good men of the Bible fell through drink? 3. Can there be any moderate use of any evil? 4. What is the only safe course? 5. Upon whom does drunkenness fall most heavily? 6. Ought we not always to so live that it will be easier for those who follow us to do right?

Seed Thoughts. 1. No one is above temptation. 2. Life's calms bring dangers as well as life's storms. 3. It is as necessary to pray "Lead us not into temptation" as "Give us this day our daily bread." 4. The propagation of sin is as great an evil as the perpetration of sin. 5. Wine is a mocker; he who begins by "drinking like a gentleman" often ends by being "drunker than a brute." 6. Sin not only hurts the sinner, but those about him and those who come after. 7. Unkindness is liable to be repaid in its own coin. 8. Charity toward others oft brings mercy to ourselves. 9. The good a man does lives through the generations that follow him.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

NADAB AND ABIHU.





THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS LEV. 10:1-11. READ, ALSO, EX. 24; EX. 6:13; NUM. 3:2, 26:60; 1 CHRON. 6:3, 24:1.

Prayer: Our Father, Help us to take warning from the miseries and punishments that others bring upon themselves through indulgence in strong drink. Make our sons strong to resist the evil that deprives men of their good judgment and sets their feet in the snare. May our offering to Thee be our noblest manhood and unwavering service. For Jesus' sake. Amen

"I will promise Thee, dear Lord, that I Will never cloud the light Which shines from Thee within my soul, And makes my reason bright. Nor ever will I lose the power To serve Thee by Thy will, Which Thou hast set within my heart, Thy precepts to fulfill."

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1490. Place, the tabernacle in the wilderness, before Mt. Sinai.

Persons: Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron; Uzziel, uncle of Aaron; Mishael, Elzaphan, cousins of Aaron; Eleazar and Ithamar, younger

sons of Aaron, and people.

Scripture Setting: Priests are commanded not to drink wine, Ezekiel 44:21. Paul declares against the use of wine, Eph. 5:18. Abstinence from wine demanded from ministers, 1 Timothy 2:3; Titus 1:3. The acceptable offering, Ps. 40:6; 51:16; Romans 18:1 12:1. Who shall abide in the tabernacle, Psa. 15.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special feature of this story is the sudden introduction of tragedy into the ceremonials attending the installation of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood. 1. The reckless sin through drunkenness of Nadab and Abihu in ignoring God's commands and offering strange fire before the Lord. 2. The miraculous and speedy retribution which destroyed them. 3. Aaron's obedience to the edict against outward mourning for his sons and his submission to God's judgment. 4. The burial of the two priests and the command against the use of wine immediately following.

DISOBEDIENCE PUNISHED.

The Occasion Aaron and his four sons had just been installed in their Divinely appointed priesthood. The solemn ceremonies of their consecration, the offering of sacrifice, had been followed by the first Aaronic benediction, and then the glory of the Lord had appeared to a great congregation, filling them with such joy that they shouted and fell on their faces. Never before had God been so manifest to His chosen people. It was an occasion long to be remembered, and happy those whose privilege it had been to see the shining faces of Moses and Aaron, the flaming sacrificial fire and the glory of the great Jehovah.

Nadab and Abihu. These two elder sons of Aaron, with their father and seventy of the elders of Israel, had gone with Moses to Sinai, where they saw the awful cloud that covered the mount and the glory of the Lord that flamed from Sinai. Had not God a right to expect that those whom He had so exalted should honor Him? God's children should show forth His righteousness to the world. Our Lord is glorified in His disciples, and Paul prays that Jesus Christ may be glorified in the Church. The name Christian signifies "a little Christ"—in all things like Christ.

The Offering of a Strange Fire. Yet on the very day of their consecration to the priesthood, Nadab and Abihu "took each of them his censer and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them." It may never be known just what they did. Is it not enough to know that they put their own will against God's will

for them? It was not the act of a moment, to be forgotten the next. The whole of this second day, all the manifestations of God's power had been to instruct the people how God was to be worshipped. And now, in their robes of office, before the assembled congregation, the two priests come, not as God in His great wisdom has commanded, but with strange fire, "setting an evil example for worshippers through all generations. The inconsistent Christian is a stumblingblock to others. Paul rests the duty of total abstinence upon this basis. It is not good to "drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." Solomon tells us that those who drink forget the law. It was under the excitement of wine that Nadab and Abihu offered that which God had not commanded. Today strong drink is the chief cause of the violation of the Ten Command-

Punishment. Because they ignored the command of God, Nadab and Abihu perished by a fire from the Lord, so miraculous that their bodies were not consumed, nor even their clothes. We must not read into this story the vengeance of an insulted and despotic God. Nature's laws are inexorable, with a death penalty for their infringement.

Aviation will never be a perfectly safe means of travel until man has solved and complied with every requirement of the laws that govern the air. Young Johnstone and a score of others met death the moment when, through some mischance, their aeroplanes opposed the course of natural law. If even the good intentioned are not immune from penalty, what of the wilful violator of God's law? To dally with sin is to "play with fire." Often the very instrument of a man's sin becomes his punishment. For one thoughtless indulgence by a young man, a diseased body and life-long pain may be the penalty.

Burial. The father and brothers were commanded to mourn in silence, and not to manifest the usual outward signs of grief. It is a consolation to pay proper respect to the dear ones taken from us, and this command was not the childish anger of an offended Deity. For Aaron, the high priest, to have mourned would have weakened the impression created through the tragic consequence of disobedience, by indicating dissatisfaction with God's judgment. However, due provisions were made for the burial of the stricken priests. Two cousins, the next nearest of kin, were pallbearers, carrying the dead, in their priestly robes, just as they had fallen, out of the camp, while the whole house of Israel mourned for these two sons of Aaron and their sin. So is God's justice ever tempered with mercy.

God First. Above father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, would Christ be exalted. What would be right at another time would be wrong and foregone if it interfered with a duty to God. Aaron refrained from mourning his own son, because his duties were so important that he could not leave the tabernacle for the days of purification that the burial of Nadab and Abihu would have entailed. But how many forego the prayer meeting, church service or Sunday school when attendance would interfere with some worldly pleasure!

Strong Drink. One wonders how men of Nadab and Abihu's training and experience could have sinned so recklessly. Ah, the secret is out—they are but two of the many men of exalted position who have erred through strong drink. From the command following right after, and forbidding God's priests to drink wine in connection with their service in the tabernacle, under the penalty of death, we may infer that the fatal sin was committed when the two priests were in a state of intoxication. Since Aaron and his two sons were in a well-nigh continuous service, the command amounted to almost total prohibition.

Requirement of the Ministry. Total abstinence was a requirement of the ministry under the new dispensation, but Paul's admonition was not adhered to. During the Middle Ages, many a priest of God was known as a wine bibber; the church followed Noah's example, and planted great vineyards. Small wonder that spirituality departed from the church, and those days

are known as the Dark Ages. How shocking it would be now to offer your minister a glass of whisky when he comes on a pastoral call! Yet, less than a hundred years ago, failure to do so was considered a mark of disrespect. Let the friends of temperance rejoice — the church is accepting Paul's teaching. Almost without exception, the Protestant ministers of the United States are "not given to wine." In England the custom of total abstinence among the clergy is becoming universal. When total abstinence is not imposed on the ministry, wine still causes forgetfulness, and disregard of God's law still makes priest and prophet err, and statistics show that eighty per cent of those deposed from the ministry in churches where the rule does not prevail, fall through strong drink.

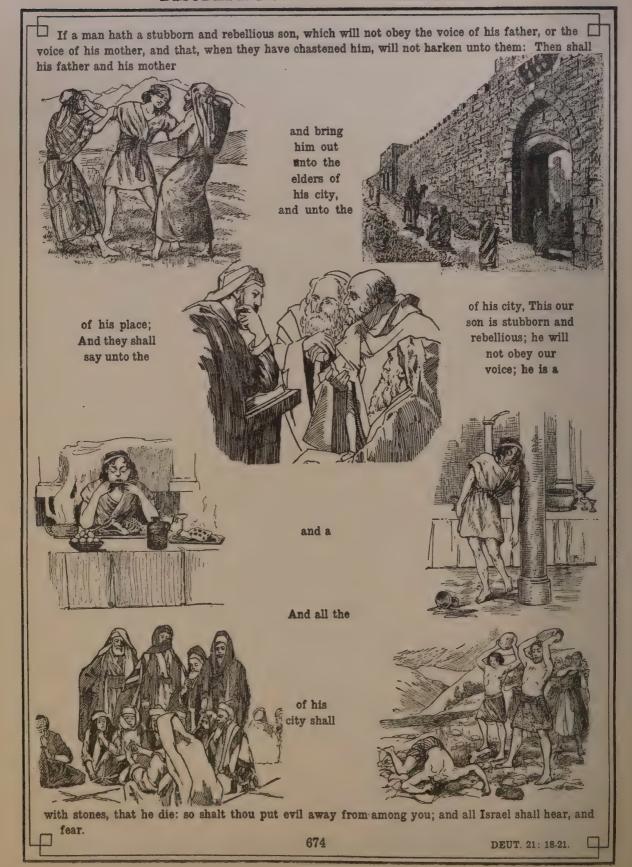
Office of the Church. The good old deacon who complained that if his pastor kept on preaching against the saloon and drunkenness, people wouldn't know the "difference between religion and temperance," would have been disquieted by the interpretation of duty which the Lord spake unto Aaron, for with the command against strong drink, Aaron was told that it was a part of his office to distinguish between holy and unholy and between clean and unclean. Ezekiel pictures the priest or minister as a watchman whose duty is to warn the people of their sins. Not alone the ministry, but the church of God has a duty in the temperance reform, and the eight million Christian voters of the land should distinguish between the clean and unclean in politics.

The Acceptable Offering. "Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord which He commanded them not." There is no better or more profitable exegesis of the lesson than the Fifteenth Psalm, wherein David tells us that he who shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord must walk uprightly, do right, speak the truth, refrain from evil speech, love his neighbor, abhor evil companions and choose God-fearing comrades; he must be a man whose word is as good as his bond, and generous and just in his dealings with others. Such a life, be it priest or layman, is an acceptable offering, for all these things He commanded.

Quiz. 1. What sudden deaths are recorded in the New Testament of professing Christians who would have deceived God in their offering? 2. What caused Nadab and Abihu's sin? 3. What prophet complains that priest and prophet err through strong drink? 4. What is an acceptable sacrifice to God? 5. What does God desire more than burnt offering?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Love and obedience must enter into service. 2. Responsibility is proportioned to privilege. 3. Disobedience is the starting point from whence all other sins enter. 4. The wages of sin is death. 5. Retribution may be not always swift, but it is sure. 6. Wine, considered the most moderate and harmless of all intoxicating drinks, lays the exalted low and counts as many victims as whisky and gin. 7. Total abstinence is the only safe course. 8. A good life is a guide post, pointing others to Christ; an inconsistent life leads to destruction. 9. God's will and God's way are always best.

DISOBEDIENCE AND DRUNKENNESS.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS DEUT, 21:18-21.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Help us to remember Thy great commandment with promise. Keep us, we pray Thee, from bringing dishonor to our parents, and from the sins of disobedience and drunkenness. For the sake of Thy dear Son. Amen.

"Sooner or later the wrong will be righted, Sooner or later the wicked will fail; Sooner or later the dark will be lighted, Sooner or later the right will prevail."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1490. Place, The Land of Moab. (Our lesson is an excerpt of an account of what Moses said in one of his addresses to the children of Israel east of Jordan.) Characters presented, A father and mother, a disobedient, drunken son, the court of elders and men of the city.

Scripture Setting: The Disobedient Son. A father of leniency, 1 Sam. 3:13. A rebellious son, II Samuel, 18:15-35. The self-willed son, I Kings 12:6-13. A repentant son, Luke 15:11.

Life and Conduct Setting: In the law concerning disobedience, we have brought before us a vivid picture: 1. The righteous, broken-hearted father

and mother, whose teaching has been scorned by their child. 2. The disobedient, rebellious, drunken son, whom their efforts have failed to reform. 3. The hearing before the court of elders. We can readily picture the sorrow and humiliation of parents compelled to thus publish their son's shame publicly. 4. The verdict of the elders. We feel sure these good men grieved for the parents, and pronounced the verdict with reluctance. 5. The punishment of death by stoning. 6. It recalls the picture of Christ when the woman was brought before Him to be stoned, and we rejoice that repentance and an appeal to Christ brings forgiveness for even the greatest sins.

A FATHER'S AND MOTHER'S SORROW.

Family Life Without God. Long before the world knew of kings or queens, or fixed government, the people lived in what is called the tribal life, all the many generations of one family forming the tribe. Justice was not administered by courts, but by the chief men, or heads of the different branches of the family which made up the tribe. Each household was ruled, even in the matter of life and death, by the father. The custom still prevails among savages and in some heathen lands, where the father may brain his daughter with a club, or the mother may abandon her babe to die, and it is not a crime. Fear, not love, rules. The parent a tyrant, the child a slave. Such was the relationship between father and child in the time of our lesson, among nations that knew not God.

God in the Home. How different the family relation under God's law! The Bible abounds with beautiful pictures of home life. Abraham's love for his son was second only to his love for God. Ruth's devotion extended not only to her husband, but to her husband's people, country and God. True, disrespect, partiality, jealousy, envy, disobedience, marred the happiness of many of these homes, but the Jewish home life was vastly superior to the tribal life of the surrounding heathen, just as today the humble Christian home pictured by Burns in the Cotter's Saturday Night is a sweeter, better place than any home of wealth and grandeur, where God is not honored. It is worthy of note that Gladstone, Rhodes, Lincoln, Washington - indeed all the world's greatest men were nurtured in Christian homes.

The Commandment with Promise. In the Pentateuch, irreverence to parents is made almost equal in its sinfulness to want of reverence for God. The father stands to his earthly children as God to the children of His creation; therefore obedience and reverence are commanded. In a limited sense, he represents God, and is to give expression to the Divine character in all his dealings with the child. God is the universal Father, and His fatherly treatment of His children, an example of parenthood. Likeness to Him is expected and demanded of earthly parents.

Shining Examples. The Bible gives us many examples of dutiful children, Joseph, when ruler of all Egypt, presents a beautiful instance of filial respect, in his respectful and tender greeting of the aged father. Where can we find a more touching example of loyalty than in Jephthah's daughter, a voluntary victim to her father's vow? David's provision for his parents and his subsequent care for them show him as a dutiful son. What an example of filial devotion and solicitude was given us when Christ, amid the agony of crucifixion, with infinite tenderness and delicacy, commended his mother to the charge of the beloved John!

Disobedience. In contrast to these is the stubborn and rebellious son of our lesson, "which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother." He has been instructed by the father, entreated by the mother; yet he tramples on parental authority, despises their commands and disobeys their law. The voices of father and mother! How often has he heard the firm voice of the father, its stern tones breaking and melting into entreaty, as foreseeing the evils

which his son must encounter through disobedience, he would have the stubborn, sullen, self-willed boy follow his counsel. Yes, and the lad has stood immovable before his mother's voice, its tender entreaty, loving expostulation and broken-hearted grief over the wrongdoing of the child of her love. To the physical suffering of motherhood he has added the pangs of spiritual travail over a son gone wrong. It has been truthfully said that "a boy would be more merciful to shoot his mother through the head than to stab her through the heart by disobedience." There is a legend that only the father lived to see the prodigal son return. The mother's heart was broken when her boy left the home.

Authority of Parents. The Bible teaches parental authority, and commends discipline, even punishment. This boy has been chastened, but he will not harken unto them. Alas, for the boy who rebels against parental discipline! Absalom was such a son, plotting rebellion against a father whose love was so great that he would have died for him; would have borne Absalom's punishment, had God permitted. God likens His own tender compassion to the pity of a father for his children. Do not mistake firmness for sternness, or rebel against a father's just punishment.

The Final Court. The love and forbearance of father and mother is so great that we find no instance in the Bible where parents availed themselves of the right to bring an incorrigibly rebellious son to the court of the elders of the city for trial and punishment for violation of the fifth commandment. But how many a noble name has been sullied by a son's drunkenness and revelry! Though the parents would hide a child's faults, his own disobedience, folly and sin publish his disgrace. Each boy and girl has a reputation among their elders for good or evil. The truest estimate of a man's character may be gained from his fellow townsmen. The great banking and guarantee firms send blanks out to the home town of the young man seeking employment, concerning his conduct and reputation. An adverse report bars him from employment.

The Indictment. "This, our son, is stubborn and rebellious; he is a glutton and drunkard." We are not surprised to find that other sins have grown out of the boy's disobedience. Paul numbers the disobedient child with those of a reprobate mind, malicious and wicked persons, boasters, blasphemers, ingrates and traitors, even murderers. The warden of a great state reformatory for boys once told the writer there was not a boy in the institution whose first crime had not been that of disobedience to parents.

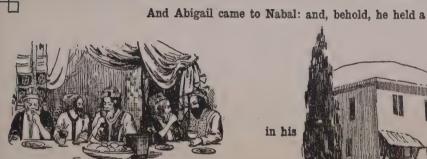
The Punishment. According to the stern code of earlier times, the disobedient, rebellious, drunken son was stoned to death by the men of his own city. The stern decree was justified by the civic good. For the same reason, in order that they may not contaminate their playmates, the present publicschool system of our larger cities segregates the bad boy from the other pupils and commits him to a truant school or reformatory. For the old dispensation, with its death penalties, Christ has substituted the reign of love, the juvenile courts, and probation officers. Truancy, industrial and reform schools are the outgrowth of that old court of the elders, with its stern death penalty. Against the dark picture of accusing parents, stern judging elders, and stoning citizens, we see Ben Lindsay, "de kids" judge of Denver, with his waifs rescued from the street, saved for the Christ who died to make men free -free from the sins of disobedience and drunkenness. We rejoice that where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound.

Quiz. 1. Name other rebellious sons mentioned in the Bible. 2. What examples of obedience are given? 3. Ask your teacher to read the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11) and of the boyhood of Christ (Luke 2:40). 4. What priest fell dead on receiving tidings of the death of two evil sons? 5. What king mourned the untimely end of a rebellious son? 6. Which of the Ten Commandments is called "The Commandment with promise?"

Seed Truths. 1. Disobedience betokens a lack of self-control. 2. Obedience is a test of character. 3. Filial duty is a privilege. 4. Disrespect to parents brings disrepute to the child. 5. Every crime has its beginning in disobedience. 6. The community in which one lives is still judge and jury, and few can outlive the verdict of his neighbors. 7. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right." 8. "He that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father."

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

NABAL'S REVEL.





Ake the feast of a



and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very



wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the



light.
But it
came to
pass
in the
morning,
when
the



was gone out of Nabal, and his



had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a



And it came to pass, about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal that he died.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 1 SAMUEL 25:2-38.

Prayer: Lord, May we not give way to foolish wrath, or err through drunkenness. Give to us, we pray Thee, a generous spirit. We ask in the name of the One who gave Himself for us. Amen.

"No tongue can express The power of true kindness to cheer and to bless; It soothes every sorrow, makes smooth every path; It lightens all burdens and turns away wrath."

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1061. Place, armel. Persons, David and his followers, Nabal, Carmel. Abigail his wife, and the young men in his service. Scripture Setting: Man's ingratitude and covetousness. Chief butlers' ingratitude to Joseph, Gen. 40:21-23. Hebrews' ingratitude to Moses, Ex. 2:11-15. Miriam's ingratitude to Moses, Num. 12.

Israel's ingratitude to God, Deut. 9. Unwise economy, Prov. 11:24-26. Generous charity commanded, Eccles. 1:2. Woe to drunkard, Isa. 5:8, 11; 28:1; Joel 15.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features

THE FOLLY OF DRUNKENNESS.

Sheep Shearing. Nabal was a wealthy farmer, and our story opens upon a familiar pastoral scene—the annual sheep shearing. In Carmel, Nabal's flocks of three thousand sheep and a thousand goats were herded. The shepherds and helpers were young men and boys who welcomed the shearing as a relief from the solitary shepherd's life. It was a time of frolic and, in this instance, of drunken revelry. Only a generation ago, intoxicating liquors were served at every barn-raising and husking bee, during harvest time and butchering. On the spring sheep shearing, liquors was dispensed, and many an innocent frolic was turned into a revel of drunkenness. Frequent excesses and even tragedies followed such indulgence, and friends of temperance rejoice that the custom has become practically obsolete.

The Master of the Sheep Fold. Nabal was a man of great wealth and noble family. He was a descendant of Judah the lion-hearted, and of Caleb, so courageous; but his senseless head, mean heart and niggardly nature made him as inferior as his great ancestors were superior to average humanity. The highest family connection and greatest wealth do not change a man's real nature,

or even gain for him true honor.

David's Request. Nabal owed much to David. Doubtless the sight of the young shepherds employed by Nabal recalled to him his own happy, carefree boyhood, when as a shepherd he himself tended his father's herds. David had no legal claim upon Nabal and he proffered none, but by all the laws of gratitude and requital his request was fair and just. It was courteous and modest. Sheep shearing was the time of remembering the flock and counting the increase over the previous year. It was a season of liberality and kindness. The Mosaic law commanded that a part of all increase should

of this story are: 1. The friendly spirit manifested by David toward Nabal and his possessions. 2. His modest request for acknowledgment of his services. 3. Nabal's churlish refusal and ingratitude for favors shown him. 4. The excessive and foolish wrath of David that would have shed innocent blood. 5. The wise tact of Abigail. 6. Her faith in God and prophetic vision of David's future. 7. Natal's drunken excess and revels. 8. The penalty which befalls Nabal and others who sin against health through drunkenness. 9. The folly of man's taking vengeance into his own hands.

go to the poor and the stranger (Deut. 24: 19-22). To give "as God hath prospered" is still one of the commands too often overlooked. We should share any great gain, the luxuries and good times that come to us with those less fortunate. David gently reminded Nabal of this custom; he hinted at the services which he and his followers had done him; he made no stated demand but modestly asked Nabal to give what might come to his hand, as a father might to a son who needed succor.

Favor Unrequited. A decent sense of gratitude would have prompted Nabal to make some return for David's services, even though there was no legal obligation. But there are small souls which are content to render no more assistance to their fellow men than they are legally bound to, and who boast that they will take all the law allows. Nabal was one of these; Shylock demanding his pound of flesh was such a man. They keep the letter of the law but have lost its spirit as enunciated in the Golden Rule of Christ, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

A Lame Excuse. Nabal would not part with anything he could possibly find an excuse for retaining, but he must have a cloak for his stinginess. This is the habit of miserly people. They not only refuse to aid the poor, but flout their poverty and impugn their misfortune; they will only help the "worthy poor" and do not even give to Christian benevolence unless assured that their money will bring a return. Such excuses may silence their own consciences as they continue to spend all their money on themselves, but will they satisfy the God whose favor extends over the just and the unjust? Nabal professes not to know his He asks David's messenger, benefactor. "Who is David?" and then justifies his refusal of the request with, "Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men that I know not whence they be?"

Foolish Wrath. Insult added to injury was more than David would bear. aroused wrath altogether out of proportion to the offence. Railing against Nabal's ingratitude, he vowed he would destroy Nabal and all he had. In his unreasonable anger he would include even the innocent shepherd lads who had been special objects of his protecting care. Rallying his band, David started on his errand of destruction. Was this wrathful, revengeful, unreasonable man the same who but a short time before had staid his hand from hurting his enemy, Saul, because the Lord was judge and avenger? Truly, wrath is cruel and anger outrageous. "To lose our temper" on the slightest provocation is folly. Some erroneously think it the mark of strength to show temper and that failure to resent insult and injury betokens a lack of spirit; but the Bible says it is a man's "glory to pass over a transgression."

Tactful and Courageous Woman. Since Nabal was as stubborn as he was stupid, and disagreeable at that, it was useless to expostulate with him; therefore one of his young men came to Abigail, Nabal's wife. He acknowledged their obligation to David and bewailed his master's stinginess and folly. Abigail, a woman of cleverness and promptitude, loaded her servants with all that a company of hungry men might need and started to intercept David. Abigail was not a woman to faint or scream at danger, but courageously and openly met the man whose warlike prowess had already been celebrated in song, and through her gifts and tact, dissuaded David from his wrathful purpose. Truly a wise answer turneth away wrath. Through Abigail's wisdom and tactfulness David was withheld from the needless shedding of blood and was restored to that spirit which had led him to leave vengeance in the hands of the Lord.

A Drunken Frolic. Nabal was too stingy to grant David's modest request, but for his own pleasure spent money like a king. How often those who are most niggardly in their gifts to God and to the poor lavish money upon themselves and gloat in reckless and wasteful expenditure for the gratification of their own evil desires. The people of the United States spend over two billion dollars for strong drink annually. The money spent

for drink would give an old age pension of twenty dollars a month to all persons over sixty years of age, and would also provide for the education of every child in the United States from five to eighteen years of age, and leave a balance to meet all the necessary expenses of government and to cover all the money expended for church and missionary purposes, and Christian benevolences. If such wicked and foolish expenditure continues, may not the United States meet the fate of the drunken Nabal? Let us take warning from the downfall of other nations through a like sin.

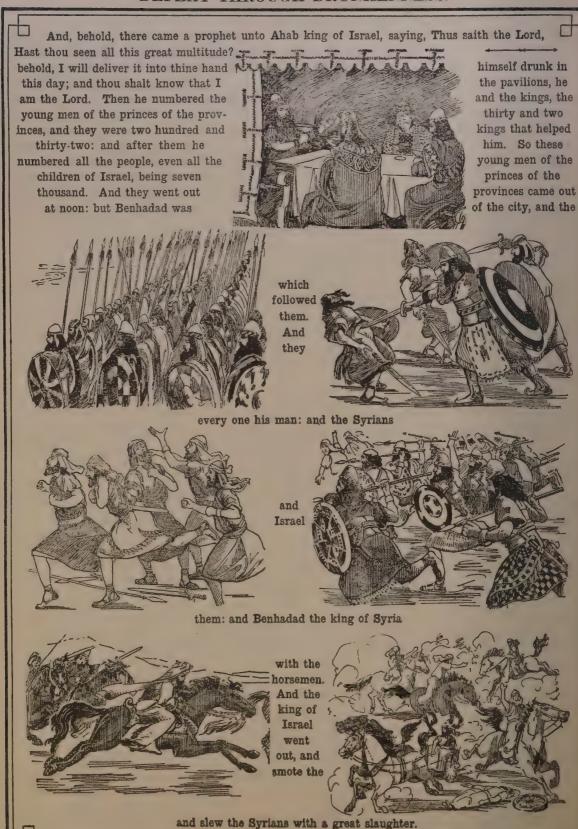
The Morning After. On her return, Abigail found Nabal so drunk that she wisely refrained from speech that night. In the morning Nabal awoke with the after effects of drink full upon him. When he heard his wife's story, penurious sorrow over the loss occasioned through her liberality and cowardly fear of what might happen, added to the physical effects of the debauch, so weakened an abused and enfeebled constitution that his death occurred ten days later.

A Decree of God. The Lord smote Nabal and he died. It required no direct and miraculous penalty such as attended the sin of Nadab and Abihu. God rules through natural law. A rebellious stomach inflamed by alcohol; the hob-nailed liver of the regular drinker; weakened arteries, fatty and degenerate muscles of a heart continually spurred to action by drink; exhausted granules that represent the nerve force of an alcoholized brain-any or all of these may have caused Nabal's death, as they cause the death of the chronic drunkard today. It is God's way to punish man for his misdeeds through the body he has offended and abused.

Quiz. 1. What king had David befriended only to receive evil for good? 2. What is Christ's command concerning requital for evil? 3. What other woman of the Bible appeared before a king and by her tact and wisdom secured the recall of his decree for the destruction of her people? 4. What was the Mosaic law in regard to strangers? 5. Name some of the penalties (physical) for drunkenness.

Seed Thoughts. 1. Changing customs in favor of total abstinence mark the progress of the temperance reform. 2. Parsimony "withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty"—of soul, if not of fortune. 3. Human law is a short yardstick. 4. He who fills the requirements of the law only falls short of the law as summed up by Christ in the two great commandments. 5. A poor excuse is worse than none. 6. Selfishness and prodigality oft go hand in hand. 7. The drunkard's punishment is in his own excess. 8. We may trust God to right our wrongs; vengeance belongs to Him.

DEFEAT THROUGH DRUNKENNESS.



680

1 KINGS 20: 13, 16, 16, 19-21.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS I KINGS 20:1-21.

Prayer: Lord, May we ever remember that wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. In Christ's name. Amen.

Where there's drink, there's danger.
Write it on the school boy's slate,
Write it on the prison gate,
Write it on the halls of state,
Where there's drink, there's danger.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of this story are: 1. Benhadad's boastful and arro-

gant tyranny. 2. Ahab's cowardly surrender to his demands, and final resistance. 3. The Syrian king's

drunken confidence. 4. The wise advice of the elders. 5. The appearance of a prophet of the Lord.

One admires the splendid dash and courage of the young men with their small army which wholly routs the Syrian hosts and causes the vaunting, drunken and dismantled king Benhadad to flee.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 901. Places, Samaria and its environs. Persons, Benhadad II., king of Syria; Ahab, king of Israel; the thirty-two kings and vassals and allies of Benhadad, the elders of Israel, prophets of the Lord and the armies of Syria and Israel.

Scripture Setting: Drunkenness. Elah's drunkenness, 1 Kings 8:9. Belshazzar's feast, Dan. 5. Warnings against drink, Prov. 23:20; 31:4, 5; Isa. 5:11; Luke 21:34; 1 Cor. 6:10. Results of drunkenness, Prov. 21:17; 23:21; 29:32; Hab. 2:5.

HOW THIRTY-THREE KINGS LOST A BATTLE.

The King. Benhadad was the title given the kings of Syria. It meant the Sun-god, for this king claimed that his father, Hadad, was a god, and he himself the god of the sun, Now, the real truth was that this Benhadad was the grandson of a petty king and the whole of Benhadad's kingdom was a part of the dominion once ruled by the great king Solomon, Ahab's own great-grandfather. Sin always makes big claims, but it has no real authority, and any power it may claim over your life or mine is a lie. Strong drink and the saloon are Benhadads, making many presumptuous claims; but the brain enslaved by drink, the saloon-ridden city, are a part of God's dominion, and should acknowledge His rule.

His Army. Benhadad had thirty-three kings with him to fight his battles and do his bidding. He had also horses and chariots and many soldiers. We are told elsewhere that this Syrian king had over one hundred and forty thousand men, two hundred and thirty-two generals, four thousand chariots and twelve hundred horsemen, and one thousand burden-bearing camels. What an imposing array! Sin is often imposing in appearance. Every great sin has other sins tributary to it—small sins and vices that make it easy for those who yield to them to fall into greater sins. The cigaret, bad books, bad words and thoughts are the allies of strong drink, and the boy who yields to them courts defeat in life. In its onward march against the homes of our country, which are the nation's real seat of government, the saloon boasts of the strength of its army; of the numbers employed; the millions of capital invested and of the petty politicians ready to do its bidding. Let us never forget that our God can overthrow the wicked king Alcohol as He did Benhadad.

Insolent Demands. A trumpeter and messengers were sent into the city to tell king Ahab that his riches, his children and all his possessions were Benhadad's, and if Ahab would give him leave to take all he pleased, Benhadad would withdraw his army. Sin makes frightful demands. The first demand may be only a dime for cigarets, but when the boy grows to manhood, Habit and Appetite, two allies of Strong Drink, have been formed and the saloon now demands all his wages, while wife and children starve. The liquor traffic demands not only two billion dollars annually from the American people, but our boys and girls as well.

Submission. Faithless king Ahab had disobeyed God. Temptation and trouble always come to those who seek evil companions and ignore God's law. Ahab forgot that all Benhadad's kingdom was his, as the great-grandson of king Solomon, whose dominion included all of Syria. Benhadad should have paid tribute to Ahab, not Ahab to Benhadad. Good people should not cringe before evil, but should make evil fear them. Sin has no ownership of the allurements it offers, for this world is a part of God's kingdom, and ours, as His sons and daughters. No good thing will He withhold from them who walk uprightly. Ahab bowed before Benhadad's claim. A rebel to God is a slave to all beside. The boy who is afraid to say "No," becomes the poor, en-slaved drunkard. Too long the American people have obeyed the demands of the saloon, paying annual tribute of one hundred thousand boys to recruit the ranks depleted by the hundred thousand slain each year by strong drink.

Greater Exaction. Ahab's submission encouraged Benhadad to send again, claiming the right to have his servants search not

only Ahab's palace, but the homes of his kindred and subjects, for whatever they might desire, leaving only what did not please Benhadad's servants, for Ahab and his friends. Benhadad must have it in his hands. It is not enough that Ahab should say it is his; he will not go till he has possession. The saloon-keeper demands cash, leaving the grocer, butcher and merchant the credit trade. Compromise and submission increase the demands of sin.

Wise Counsellors. Ahab had wise counsellors. The best counsellors are the Word of God and our parents. "Hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother." A boy is never too big to mind his mother. Washington, Lincoln and Garfield are only a few of the great men who acknowledge that success and honor were won through obedience to a mother's

wise counsel.

Declaration of Independence. Ahab was not wholly a coward. His own silver and gold, his own wives and children, he had given to Benhadad, but he would not bargain away the lives, property and families of others. His people must be protected from the unjust demands of Benhadad. Should the voters of this republic be less true to their obligation as rulers than Ahab? Yet men who would not squander their own money for drink make it easy for others to impoverish themselves. Few are willing to furnish the boys for the saloon, but many consent to the destruction of their neighbor's boys. Let us say with Ahab, "This thing I may not do."

A Drunken Commander. Benhadad rages and foams. He will destroy this people. He will even carry away the ground on which the city stands. He gives orders that can-not be executed. Drink destroys the judgment. For this reason, our business firms, factories and railroads demand total abstinence from those in charge. As one manufacturer expresses it, "A drunken foreman is too expensive an experiment." The brain is commander-in-chief of an army of muscles, nerves and brain or thought cells. Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste keep the brain informed, just as war generals keep the wires burning with messages from the seat of war to their chief. Experiments made by noted scientists prove that even so small an amount of alcohol as is contained in a mug of beer, half a glass of whisky, or a glass of wine, has a stupefying effect on the action of the brain, the five senses and the muscles, thus weakening the brain and its

army corps, just as Benhadad and his generals were unfitted for command by drink.

The armies of Benhadad and Belshazzar are not the only ones defeated because of drunkenness. The wonderful endurance of the Boer army was largely due to their total abstinence from liquor. The drinking of the Spanish officers and sailors on the eve of battle made the American victory easier, while it is said the Russo-Japanese war was a fight of water drinkers against vodka drinkers.

A Wise Answer. So wise was Ahab's reply to Benhadad that it has become a proverb. The boy who smokes, drinks and gambles may laugh at the clean boy as a "sissy," but he soon finds himself a failure, while the boy he ridiculed has outdistanced him. It is not well to be too sure of one's self; even good men fall through over-confidence. "God is a very present help in time of trouble." Ahab had ignored God. He did not ask God for help, but God sent His prophet to him. How like the loving Father! We love Him because He first loved us.

The Battle. How small in number!-only two hundred and thirty-two-and they were young men who had never seen battle. There were but seven thousand in the entire army that went up against Benhadad. It is worth while to note that the number is the same as those who had not bowed to Baal. Success does not depend on numbers, but on loyalty to God. Benhadad and his kings at headquarters were drinking instead of leading the army on to battle. Benhadad loudly orders that the young men be taken prisoners, even though they say they came on an errand of truce. He who drinks, defies law and ignores justice. The king and his staff drink on, for Benhadad despises these boys, but when they have routed the Syrian army, drunk as he is, the proud king dare not face them, but flees. So Goliath despised David. The greatest confidence often ends in the greatest cowardice. It was a hand-to-hand encounter. They slew every one his man. The Christian warfare is not a fight with long-range guns, but a daily, hourly, personal struggle. Each must meet his own temptation and slay his own besetting sin.

Victory Won by Youth. John, the beloved disciple, was a fiery youth, and in his old age wrote: "I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong." At twelve years of age, the boy Jesus de-clared it was time He was about His Father's business. God has a work for the boys and girls. The nation needs its young men. The struggle against strong drink and a legalized liquor traffic, which the American people have entered upon, though peaceful, is a call to the young manhood and womanhood of the nation was for examined as the nation was for examine

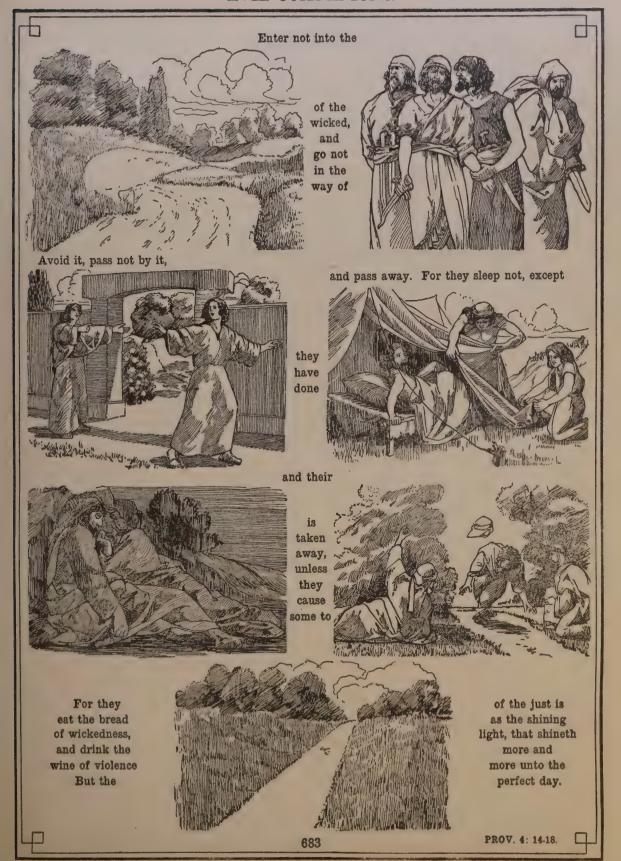
manhood of the nation—yes, for every boy and girl.

Quiz and Study. 1. What other Bible kings fell
through drunkenness? 2. Did the government ever
provide for the sale of alcoholic drinks to its soldiers? 3. Does it do so now? Why not? 4. Does the saloon rule in your town? 5. Will you try to

overcome it?

Seed Thoughts. 1. The battle is not to the strong. 2. An unjust demand should ever be rejected. 3. We should never submit to the demands of Satan. 4. The braggart is a coward. 5. Who chooses sin, chooses defeat. 6. Strong drink weakens and destroys the greatest general. 7. He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city. 8. God does not demand age or experience of his soldiers, only loyalty. 9. He who threatens most, accomplishes least. 10. God gives the victory.

EVIL COMPANIONS.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PROVERBS 4:14-27.

Prayer: Lord, Help us avoid the companionship of those who would lead us from Thee, and guide our feet in the paths of righteousness, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1000. Place, Jerusalem. Person, Solomon, or one of the wise men of his time.

Scripture Setting: The Straight and Narrow Path, or the Broad Road? A blessing and a curse, Deut. 11:26-28. The wise choice, Deut. 30:19-20. The path of life, Psa. 16:11. The guiding light, Psa. 119; 105. Old and tried path, Jer. 6:16. The two ways, Matt. 7:13-14. The true way, John 14:6. Life and Conduct Setting: The special features "Be Thou my friend and guide, Let me with Thee abide; Purer in heart, O God, Help me to be."

of the lesson are: 1. A prohibition against an al-

liance with the wicked, and evil companionship. 2. The activity of the wicked. 3. Sin through excessive love of pleasure. 4. The contrast between the path of the just and of the wicked. 5. The importance of reading and hearkening to the Word of God. 6. The necessity of a clean heart. 7. Evil speech to be shunned. 8. Action to be studied and considered. 9. A straight course commanded.

THE TWO ROADS.

The King's Highway. In ancient times, broad, winding highways were built at great expense and care from all parts of the kingdom to the capital, and these roads were called the king's highway. Civil engineers of the present time admire and wonder at the smooth, enduring hardness of some of these roads still extant. Treasure was lavishly expended to make them beautiful. Costly statues, exquisite flowers and spreading trees made these highways most inviting to the traveler. But, alas! there was never any period when these mountain roads, even within a few miles of the capital, were not haunted by thieves, bold highwaymen, who lurked behind rocks and trees, to rob and even murder the passing travelers. Travelers with a knowledge of the lurking places of these robber bands would avoid the king's highway and go across country. Such a course was always more difficult, with frequent obstacles to overcome, but they not only evaded danger but arrived at their destination by a more direct route. Even up to the eighteenth century travelers upon English public highways were subject to preying bands of robbers.

The Narrow Path. In this way paths were finally worn, chosen by the discreet traveler, who saw, behind the beauty and smoothness of the king's highway, its lurking dangers. Owing to its smoothness and breadth, royalty traveled the king's highway, and the king and his roistering train of followers were frequent victims of the highwaymen. Merchants, with their camelladen trains, risked meeting the robberbands sometimes once too often. The gay and thoughtless chose the king's highway because of its beauty and the apparent ease with which one might travel it. It was always thronged with a merry, careless tide of people and the straight path was narrow and laborious; oftentimes, instead of going around some steep place, the travelers were

compelled to climb straight up and on. Though there were beauties there, such as the king's highway might not boast, they were unseen by the casual passerby. Few people traveled that way.

The Two Different Ways. In that wonderful sermon on the Mount, Christ likens the passage through life to these roads, since the illustration would be familiar to his hearers. In the parable of the straight gate and narrow path that leads to the King in His Heaven, and the broad gate opening

upon the broad and much traveled road. whose end is destruction, we have the choice of good and evil; for it is plainly written that it is open to everyone to choose which

road he shall travel.

A Danger Sign. In our lesson the simile is used to show the temptations to which all who journey through life are exposed. The lesson is a danger sign set up by the wisest man of his age for those of every age and clime. It opens as abruptly as when a traveler is startled by the red danger signal or comes suddenly upon a great signboard.

Dangerous, No Thoroughfare. What could be more emphatic than those two opening verses? "Enter not into the path of the wicked and go not in the way of evil men." Many a boy consorts with evil associates and is flattered by the companionship of smoking, swearing and drinking comrades, who emulate the vices of their elders under the false impression that familiarity with evil is an indication of manliness. When approached with an offer of high wages for some questionable employment, the young man in search of a vocation may well halt a moment before this danger sign, "Enter

not into the path of the wicked."

C. Q. D. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away." This warning is so urgent that it becomes a C. Q. D. sign. The exploitation and notoriety gained by the

highway robber leads many a boy reader of the sensational dime novel to emulate his hero's wicked defiance of law. Many a foolish youth chafes under the quiet and restraint of the school and longs for the excitement of bandit life. "Avoid" the dime novel and those who read such books. Be assured that the highwaymen of fiction and the highwaymen of reality are very different men and the boy who seeks such companionship chooses danger. It may be the rollicking, drunken revellers of the highway who invite the youth to join their revel. "Pass not by."

Choose the other side of the street: do not voluntarily go in the neighborhood of the saloon and gambling place, and avoid the company of those who frequent evil places, lest temptation assail you. Familiarity with evil weakens one's powers of resistance. On the highway are those who boast of dishonest gain and tainted wealth, until a steady job and regular wage seem "too slow" to an ambitious youth who risks his all on some gambling chance whose only certainty is loss. "Turn from" business associates and advisers whose methods savor of dishonesty or fraud. The votaries of impurity may lure with evil picture, music or song. "Pass away" and listen not to the siren song of those who would lure to ruin.

They Sleep Not. The emissaries of evil are tireless. The saloonkeeper, remembering that his present patrons must die, tries to win the boys and courts their patronage. The eighty tons of impure literature destroyed by the Society for the Prevention of Vice, show the strenuous effort of evil men and women to corrupt the youth. Safety lies in obedience to the command, "Be vigilant."

The Straight and Narrow Path. Having pictured the path of evil and its attendant dangers, we come to one of those contrasts with which the book of Proverbs abounds. "The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The writer has pictured a sunrise! One sees the triumphant progress of a steadfast, righteous soul through life. The dawn of youth with all its rosy hopes unclouded by any presage of evil habits, the steady rising from the darkness of adversity to the bright high noon of a perfect life, the afternoon brightness of a life well spent. No clouds of dishonor and disgrace gather to foretell a rueful sunset, but straight on in all its shining brightness of honest endeavor, purity and transcendant principle to a full day, when in the glowing splendor of a triumphant and joyous death it passes over to eternity's blest tomorrow. More than half a century did Frances E. Willard, the great temperance reformer, travel the path of the just, when in her dying moments, with the light of the eternal day upon her face, she exclaimed, "How beautiful to be with God!"

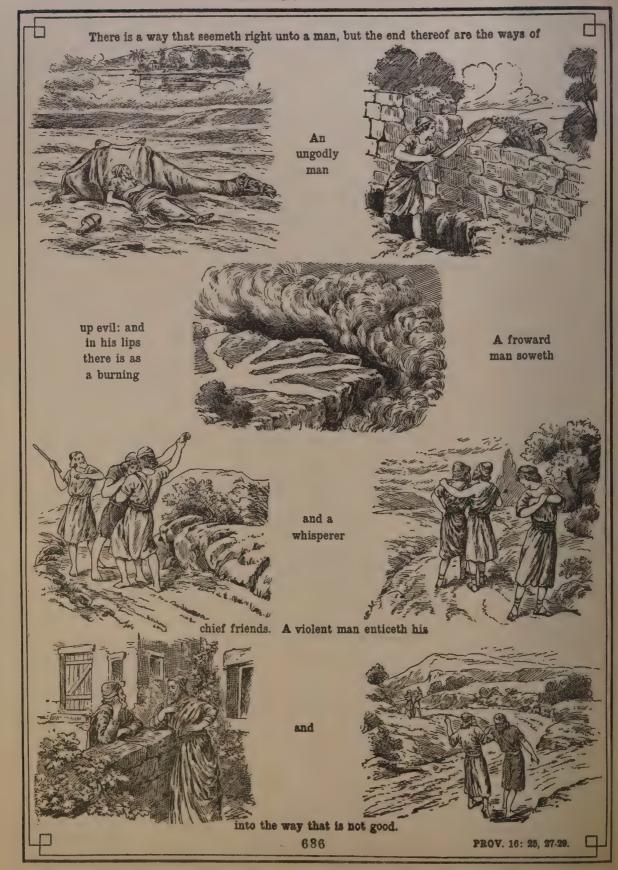
The Way of the Wicked. It is said that few save those who are sightless know what is absolute darkness. Even when covered with thick cloud, the moon and stars relieve the darkness of the night; while so few things are utterly impervious to light that it is well nigh impossible to shut out the vibrating waves of sunlight, on even the darkest day. In the time of the Inquisition. and the later days of prison horror, men would choose torture rather than undergo the terrors of the "dark cell." many emerged from it with reason dethroned. Imagination peopled its darkness with unknown horrors. The prisoner feared to grope along its walls, not knowing what his hands might touch. He dare not move a foot, not knowing what he might stumble upon. So is the way of the wicked. The drunkard must suffer delirium tremens; the criminal, fear of detection; the impure, an enfeebled body. It is not strange that sin makes cowards of its devotees. "They know not at what they stumble."

The Only Safety. Having presented the vivid contrast between good and evil; having set up the danger signal, the writer points us to the guide post that leads to safety, and from the remainder of the chapter we learn that the only security is in the diligent keeping of ears, eyes, heart, lips, feet and hands from evil. Companionship extends not only to persons. The ear should not keep company with coarse jest; impure pictures are imaged by the eye, until they become a man's lifelong companions. Unclean thoughts may be entertained by the heart until they gain permanent dwelling; the lips are soiled by association with lewd and profane words; the feet make acquaintance with the public dance hall and are lured to destruction, while the hands touch many an unclean thing until familiarity with the evil makes them close companions.

Quiz. 1. What great prophet and leader set a blessing and a curse before the children of Israel? 2. When did Christ picture two ways of life to His hearers? 3. Have you read how Christian sought the Wicket Gate in Pilgrim's Progress? 4. What false guide set him upon the wrong path? 5. Have we any choice between good and evil?

Seed Thoughts. 1. There is always a beginning to sin; shun the first disobedient act. 2. Evil companions and sinful associates are to be avoided. 3. Temptation demands active resistance and conquest. 4. The activity of the wicked should spur the good to greater endeavor. 5. A just man is a beacon light to others. 6. The good are not left in darkness. 7. Life has no place for indecision. 8. He who hesitates is lost. 9. A straight course is always the best course.

DESTRUCTIVE VICES.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS PROV. 16:25-33.

Prayer: Lord help us to see evil as Thou seest it, and may our lives abound in the fruits of the Spirit. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father, hear us now, And help us keep this sacred vow; Tho' we are young, oh, make us strong, Always to fight against the wrong.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1000. Place, Jerusalem, Person, Solomon.

Scripture Setting: A study of sins that spoil a life. Folly of self-will, Prov. 12:15. The end of a selfish life, Luke 12:18-20. The way of the ungodly, Psa. 1:6. The froward man, Prov. 3:32. Tattlers and busybodies, 1 Tim. 5:13. Devices of the wicked condemned, Prov. 12:2.

Life and Conduct Setting: We have brought before us, 1. The sin and folly of self-will. 2. The folly of greed and selfishness. 3. The evil of ungodliness. 4. The mischief-maker as a source of evil. 5. Gossip and talebearing. 6. The man of evil. The lesson is a warning against vices prevalent at all times.

CHARACTER SKETCHES.

Self Will. When seeking the Wicket Gate which would give him an entrance to eternal life. Christian meets Mr. Worldly Wiseman. who does not like that a man should be serious or read his Bible, or be troubled about sin, and who almost persuades Bunyan's hero that he may attain his desire without strict observance of the rules Evangelists had laid down for his guidance. "There is a way that seemeth right to a man." There are people who oppose their own will to the Divine will and claim the right to frame the laws which shall govern their own conduct. Those who attend Sunday games and theatre see "no harm in it." The advocates of so-called personal liberty say "a man has a right to drink or let it alone, as he pleases." Disobedient children think their parents "oldfashioned"; and every wrongdoer justifies himself, but "the end thereof are the ways of death." The Bible tells us, "The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walketh to direct his steps." We are not only to obey, but we are to delight in the law of the Lord. "He that laboureth, laboureth for himself."

Selfishness and Greed. In that wonderful tale of Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan introduces us to Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-lover, and Mr. Save-all, who, he tells us, "were school-fellows and were taught by one Mr. Gripe-man, a school-master in Lovegain, which is a market town in the county of Coveting, in the North." He also tells us of the silver mine located in Lucre Hill, over which the ground was so thin that it was dangerous for any to venture that way. The ground broke under them, and cost many their lives, while others were maimed and "could not to their dying day be their own men again." It is one thing to own wealth, another to be owned by wealth. The fever of money getting, the desire to get rich at the expense of others, to live for one's self, and

seek one's own good, are vices which destroy the soul. "I make shoes for a livelihood, but my employment is to do my Master's bidding," was the reply of a poor shoemaker when asked what was his employment. He labored not for himself.

Ungodliness. A heathen convert who came to the United States to become better fitted for missionary work among her own people, was asked what most impressed her in this country, and she replied, "The lack of reverence for God. In my country we have many gods, and we serve them all: here, you have but one God, and you do not serve Him. We reverence the gods we have made; your people fail to reverence the one great God who made them. My poor people pray and give thanks to gods who do nothing for them; yours seldom pray or give thanks to the God who has given you all this beautiful country, with its many benefits." Ingratitude is ignoble. An ungodly man is like a mariner who sails upon an uncharted sea without rudder or compass. His life-bark is bound to be grounded on the shoals of temptation-wrecked on the danger rocks of sin. Nothing can stay his destruction. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips there is a burning fire."

Mischief Making. "A froward man soweth strife." The blessing of Heaven descends on the peace-maker, but condemnation rests upon the one who sows discord. One person with an ungovernable, ugly temper, will destroy the happiness of the home, the peace of a whole community, and even bring dire results upon a nation. Give such a character a wide berth. An unhappy, quarrelsome disposition is a frequent cause of ill-health to its owner. Scientists tell us the bodily secretions of an angry person are poisonous. There is a legend that either thorns or heartsease spring up from the footsteps of each traveller through life. We

may not receive the world-wide acclaim accorded former President Roosevelt, when through his efforts as peacemaker the cruel and disastrous war between Russia and Japan was ended, but we can lessen friction and cause strife to cease between our friends and neighbors. We may never meet with the great Peace Tribunal at the Hague for the settlement of difficulties between nations, but we may carry with us an atmosphere of peace which shall cause wrath to subside, and evil to flee.

Tale Bearing. With one stroke does our great word-artist picture a character that has caused trouble through all the ages-"a whisperer separateth chief friends." Tattle and gossip is not dispensed upon the public street by those who loudly call their wares, but is retailed from house to house in whispers. The gossip is full of hint, suggestion and innuendo. No open charge or indictment is made, a few whispers, a significant nod, a shrug of the shoulders, and the reputation of an innocent person is torn to shreds. The talebearer has been called "the Judas of every society of which he is a member." The whisperer adds coal to the fire of distrust that has been created between friends; no confidence is esteemed sacred, no secret is regarded by him, and he becomes the most despicable of beings.

Scheming. There are negative people who accomplish little good or evil in the world, but not so the one set before us. "He enticeth his neighbor and leadeth him into a way that is not good; devises froward things, and bringeth evil to pass." The world is full of schemes which work evil to others. Get-rich-quick schemes, in which both parties are dishonest, since those who fall victims seek to get something without giving a just equivalent in exchange; speculative ventures which are often hazardous as gambling. Political trickery of those who hold the people's confidence. Alas! that a youth can scarcely walk the streets of a city or town without enticement to evil. saloon, the slot machine and the gambling hall, and the house of evil are all peopled by those who are plotting and devising means for the downfall of our youth. may take no active part in it, but are we not consenting to their destruction? As long as a part of the revenue therefrom flows into city, county, state and national coffers, have not each of us a part in these works of violence?

The Crown of Old Age. What a contrast is presented in the picture of a righteous old

age! "The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." The other characters depicted may live to be old. Indeed, one may picture the unlovable old age of each. The morose, stormy, obstinate old man, feared and endured only because of his advanced years; the selfish, greedy miser, guarding his hoard and with cowardly fear awaiting the separation from his gold, which death must bring. more distressing than an ungodly old age. without comfort and without hope! The mischief maker, always a divisive factor, at last alienated from all friends, to spend an unloved, lonely old age; the doting gossip with garrulous wagging tongue; the wicked old Fagin depicted by Dickens.-In striking contrast is the white-haired servant of the Lord, with staff in hand, facing death with joyous confidence. "Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Nowadays one hears much about keeping young. There are beauty doctors to massage away wrinkles: hair dyes to cover tell-tale gray hairs, but all these efforts to hide the signs of advancing years are futile. It were wiser to learn how to grow old. Character is the greatest beautifier; gray hair, a crown of glory if worn by a "child of the King."

The Greatest Ruler. "He that is slow to

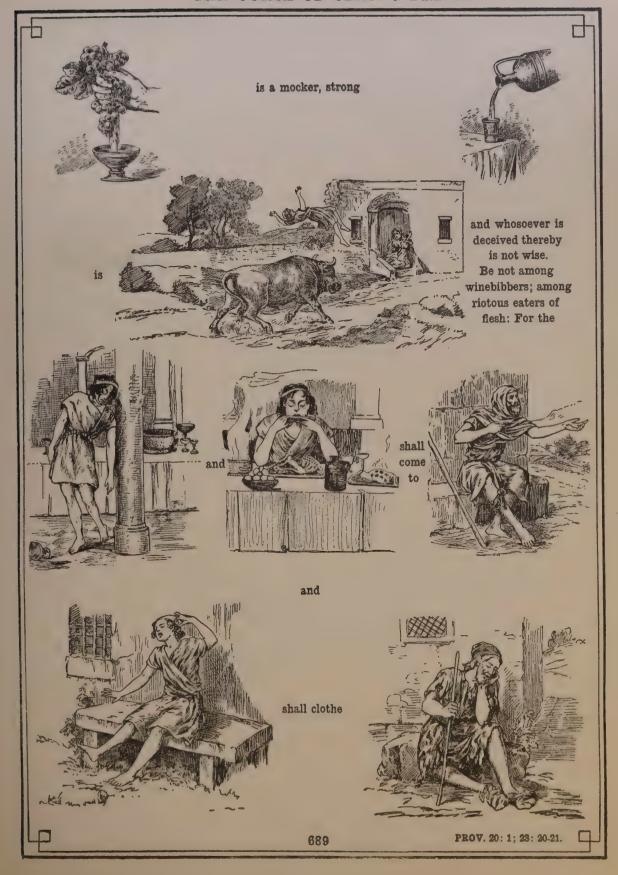
The Greatest Ruler. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty." Anger perverts judgment and is the cause of many misfortunes. It is the sign of a weak character, the mark of a weak brain. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly." It is said that Abraham Lincoln was never known to be angry. The enduring patience of years enabled him to be the calm, dispassionate pilot who should hold steady the Ship of State during the stormy period of the Civil War. "He that ruleth his spirit, than he taketh a city." The real hero is the one who gains a victory over self.

Quiz. 1. What prophet of the Bible opposed his will to God's will for him, refusing to take the journey God commanded, and what was his punishment?
2. Name those commandments most frequently violated by ungodly men. 3. What is the Hague Peace Tribunal?
4. What disciple of Christ was the victim of talebearers and false witnesses and was stoned to death. 5. What plotter was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for another?

Seed Truths. 1. The self-willed are weak of

Seed Truths. 1. The self-willed are weak of will, since they do not have the reinforcement of the Divine will with which to withstand temptation. 2. The man who is a law unto himself, is the most lawless of men. 3. Greed impoverishes the heart and starves the soul. 4. Selfishness and loneliness are close companions. 5. A man's possessions often gain possession of the man. 6. He who labors for himself has a hard task master.

THE CURSE OF STRONG DRINK.



THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS PROVERBS 20:1; 23:20-21.

Prayer: Dear Lord, May we beware of the tempter and not be deceived by evil. Make us wise to shun strong drink. Help us not only to avoid the evil ourselves but do thou help us in saving others from the curse. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

Alcohol's a hard and cruel master,
And he pays in wretched coin,
Of rags, and blame and crime and shame,
Come every one and join,
From all nations, of all ages.
Come! we want you one and all
In our strike against the wages
Of old tyrant, Alcohol.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, about 1000 B. C. Place, Jerusalem. Person, Solomon.

Scripture Setting: Some of the causes of Poverty. The sluggard, Prov. 6:6-11. Slackness in dealings, Prov. 10:4. Indolence, Prov. 20:13; 24:33-34. Gluttony, Prov. 23:1-3. Bad company, Prov. 28:19. Better than riches and trouble, Prov. 15:16.

Life and Conduct Setting: The writer gives us a vivid word picture of the train of evils which

follow strong drink, and emphasizes, 1. The mockery of resorting to wine for strength, happiness or riches. 2. The violence committed through strong drink. 3. That a lack of wisdom is shown by those who use intoxicating liquors. 4. The evil of associating with drunken companions. 5. The sin of self-indulgence. 6. Drunkenness and wastefulness as a cause of poverty. 7. The abject condition of the drunkard.

MOCKED AND DECEIVED.

Wine. Wine is one of the oldest of beverages. Its use dates so far back that it is not known when men first began to drink the fruit of the vine. It is now generally accepted that two kinds of wine were in use. The one was harmless, being the fresh juice of the grape, often pressed from the grapes by the royal cup-bearer before the king's eyes, or by the waiting servants in the presence of the guests. Such was the wine referred to by Jacob in his blessing to Judah; in Moses' song it is named the "pure blood of the grape." It may be likened to the unfermented juice of the grape which is fast displacing the fermented wine in sickness. If we keep this harmless drink in mind it will make it easier to understand some of the biblical references to wine. Then there was the fermented wine, also in frequent use and working evil then as it does today.

Bible Attitude Toward Wine. All other writers and writings of ancient times commend the moderate use of intoxicants, and even approve occasional drunkenness. toxication is only condemned when it is habitual. A tablet excavated from the ruins of ancient Babylon tells us that "Wine drunk in season and to satisfy is joy to the soul." The Bible contains no such passages Instead, we find throughout its as this. pages, warning instances of the power of wine to deceive and destroy, condemnation and even prohibition of its use, Divinely appointed orders of men, such as the Nazarites and Rechabites, with a pledge stronger than that of any teetotaler of the present day.

A Mocker. "Wine is a mocker." It approaches under the garb of a friend. It seeks to win the invalid through the promise of health, when it really weakens the en-

feebled organs so as to retard recovery. Though science has shattered the claim, it comes to the poor man with a claim that it is a food, and through the money expended for drink it robs himself and family of food. It mocks the weak of will with the belief that they are strong-willed enough to drink or let it alone, until will power is dethroned. It makes men boast of and fight for personal liberty when they are slaves of alcohol. It seeks recognition under the plea that the Bible countenances the use of wine, until its victim falls under the ban, "No drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God." "I know enough to let drink alone when it harms me," said a young man to John B. Gough. "Ah, yes, but the trouble is, when the thing has gone that far, drink will not let you alone," was Gough's reply.

A Cause of Crime. "Strong drink is raging," or a brawler. It rouses and stirs evil passions. Under its influence, even pure men and women become impure. drinker becomes crafty, deceitful and untrustworthy. It tends to the destruction of every God-given faculty of man. Judge Coleridge, the great English jurist, declares that in the course of his judicial life, "There is scarcely a crime before me that is not directly or indirectly caused by drink." Scientific experiments made with the most delicate and susceptible instruments prove that an ordinary glass of whiskey will produce a loss of self-control and lowering of the will power. At a chapel meeting in the Ohio States Prison, the 2,500 convicts in attendance were asked how many were there because of crimes committed through strong drink, and over 2,300 hands were uplifted. When asked how many of the 2,500 present

had always been total abstainers, only two

hands went up.

The Drunkard's Folly. Our writer has told us the deceptive powers of strong drink and now he assures us that "Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." To listen to an imposter is always a sign of folly, and alcohol is the greatest of imposters. To risk health, character and fortune for that which ruins the first, destroys the second, and wrecks the third, shows a lack of wisdom. Strong drink has ruined many illustrious men, but never a man wholly wise. It is said in a certain English insane asylum the following test of sanity is used: The water plug is turned on in a water-tight compartment and the patient is given the task of drying the flooded floor. If he makes an unsuccessful effort to dry the floor with the large mop given him, he is held for treat-ment. If he shuts off the water by closing the plug, he has proven his sanity. For a man to attempt to attain success against the inroads of strong drink is as great a sign of folly.

Temperance in All Things. Not only are we counselled against intoxication, but against excess in eating. We are not to be among immoderate, "riotous" eaters of flesh. The prohibition related to banquets which were orgies of gluttony and drunkenness, of which the Bible contains many instances. Temperance has been defined as moderation in the use of all things helpful, and abstinence from all things harmful. An excessive meat diet leads to a desire for alcoholic

liquors.

A Source of Poverty. "For the drunkard and the glutton come to poverty." The money annually spent for drink, if rightly expended, would give to each of the three million families affected by drink, the following articles: Four barrels of flour, sixty dozen eggs, sixty pounds of butter, two hundred pounds of beef, sixty-five pounds of chicken, two barrels of apples and a goodly supply of other fruit. Yes, and instead of the poor receiving their Christmas turkey as a charity, there would still be enough money left to enable every drinking man to buy a turkey for his own family every Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Truly, temperance means "Coal in the cellar, potatoes in the bin, flour in the barrel, a piano in the parlor, beefsteak for breakfast, a roast for dinner, hats for the head, coats for the back, and shoes for the feet."

"The Raggedy Man." "Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." Love of drink

makes a man a useless and unproductive member of society. He becomes incapable; his money is poured into the saloonkeeper's till. His brain becomes dull, his muscles grow flabby, hard and honest work becomes distasteful, and soon his place in labor's ranks is filled by a soberer man. The hours are spent in tippling; the one degrading habit has transformed a man into a dull, sodden loafer clothed in rags. Drunkenness is always marked by a disregard for personal appearance.

An Unfortunate Trio. We hear much discussion nowadays of the cause of poverty and find many remedies advocated. Solomon made a study of the social conditions of his time, and throughout Proverbs ascribes poverty to three causes which are usually treated as one, and there is an increasing tendency on the part of present day students of the social problem to recognize the same three great causes of poverty. Drunkenness, indolence and sensuality are closely allied. Just as in the old-time riddle, Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess were one, so the drunkard. glutton and sluggard are too often one and the same person. "What is it makes the rich man richer and the poor man poorer?" shouted an orator. He waited for someone to add the climax to his efforts, by replying, "Monopolies and trusts," but the answer, when it came, held more of truth than demagoguery, for some clear-headed listener shouted "Beer!" "He who does not plow, will not reap." Strong drink and the saloon are a baleful cause of indolence and inertness. Self-denial and self-control are handmaids of success.

Quiz. 1. What two orders of total abstainers are mentioned in the Bible? 2. What is the difference between the attitude of the Bible and that of other ancient writings in regard to strong drink? 3. What Judge of Israel was a Nazarite and what can you say of his strength? 4. What can you say of John the Baptist? 5. What person in the Bible, yielding to appetite, sold his birthright for a mess of pottage? 6. What example of industry and thrift is commended to the sluggard?

Seed Thoughts. 1. The devil is the father of lies; wine, the deceiver, is therefore one of his progeny. 2. "Fools make a mock at sin." 3. Strong drink is the fool's trap. 4. The drunkard, glutton and sluggard often wear the same hat, and use the same pair of feet. 5. Self-indulgence gains a master; self-denial gains the mastery. 6. Drunkenness and poverty are close companions. 7. The glutton pays the debt to his stomach through a mortgage on his future expectations. 8. Fast Asleep snores when Opportunity calls. Wide Awake jumps at the first call and gets first place. 9. The true Christian is "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

INTEMPERANCE.



not thou upon the



when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the



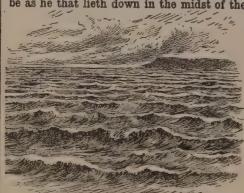
when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a



and stingeth like an



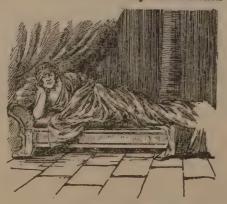
Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the



or as he that lieth upon the



They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not



they have



me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS PROV. 23:29.35.

Prayer. Lord, May we ever remember Thy warnings against strong drink and be preserved from the sin of intemperance. For Christ's sake. Amen.

"At home, abroad, by day or night, In company or in town, If asked to drink, we'll smile and turn Our glasses upside down.''

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 1000, Place,

Jerusalem. Person, Solomon.

Scripture Setting: Drunkenness and its consequences. The arrogance of the drinker, Hab. 2:5. Counsel against drunkenness, Rom. 13:13. The drunkard unprepared for death, Luke 21:34. The fancied security of the drunkard, Deut. 29:19-20. The drunkard lost, Gal. 5:21.

Life and Conduct Setting: Again we are warned

against intemperance. In a query of startling com-

prehensiveness and its answer, the attention is called to, 1. The remorse that follows a misspent life. 2. The sorrows that attend the drunkard. 3. The evil effect of wine upon the disposition and temper. 4. The untrustworthiness of the testimony of the drinking man. 5. The unnecessary ills a drinker brings upon himself. 6. The changed appearance of the drunkard. 7. The evils chargeable to strong drink. 8. The command of total abstinence and avoidance of temptation.

A PERTINENT QUERY ANSWERED.

The Question, "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath babbling? hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?" It is said that Lorenzo Dow, an itinerant preacher of early days, was once appealed to, to discover a criminal who was supposed to be in his audience. The shrewd preacher prefaced his sermon with a graphic account of the crime, ending with the words. "The man who committed this crime is before me, and I will now expose him by throwing a stone at him." The threat was accompanied by an appropriate gesture of the hand and the guilty man disclosed himself Through the subdivisions of by dodging. his question the Wise Man has thrown a handful of stones at his congregation; thrown them with such unerring aim that every drinking man dodges.

Who Hath Woe? The drunkard's lamentation over his weakness, over promises unredeemed and pledges broken, over the return to the wallow, the pitiless, agonized cry of remorse when returning reason brings to the man the realization of some awful crimes committed when crazed by drink: belated regret for wasted opportunities and a life misspent, these are some of the woes of the drunkard. Who has not seen the sign, "Damaged by Fire! For Sale Cheap!" above a window-display of smoke-stained articles? There is not a converted man whose life has been blackened by the fires of sinful lust and appetite who would not part gladly with the remembrance of those misspent years. "Damaged by Fire, For Sale Cheap!" is the placard every reformed man would put over the wasted years of his

Who Hath Sorrow. A man drinks for pleasure, to have enjoyment, and for a "good time with the fellows." He drinks in public

and in private, simply because it is pleasant. There are many excuses for drunkenness. One man drinks because his doctor prescribes it for a month, another drinks beer because it is a food, when he knows full well by indisputable scientific evidence beer has been proven not a food. The infinitesimal amount of nutriment contained in beer could be obtained in greater quantity from hops and grain before they are malted and brewed, but the man who drinks beer for its food properties, does not resort to grain and hops in their natural state twenty or thirty times a day, nor frequent the stores where they are sold till late hours of the night. Men drink for self-gratification, but how often self-gratification gives way to selfloathing. Said a man recently, "As I stood before the open grave of my mother whose heart I had broken by my evil ways, the whole world seemed black, the skies were laden with a weight of sorrow that will never be lifted from me."

Who Hath Contentions? How often has the world been startled by some violent crime committed by the most peaceable of men as a result of drink? How many mothers plead before the police court for the wayward boy who was a "good son and would never have disgraced himself by striking his mother had he not been drunk"? The number of men who are loving husbands and fond fathers except when under the influence of liquor! The people who live in an atmosphere of strife and loud quarreling and brawls because of strong drink! One of the first and most marked improvements noted under local option is the diminished number of brawls and police trials, while in Prohibition States there is marked decrease in the number of murders.

Who Hath Babbling? By weakening self-control, alcohol loosens the tongue. The intoxicated man will blab family details and business secrets to the shame of his family and detriment of his business. It has been scientifically demonstrated that within thirty minutes after taking an ordinary glass of spirits, memory, thought, reason and discrimination are all weakened; the flow of speech has been started, but the speaker is in an unsafe condition of mind, unable to judge whether his remarks are foolish or brilliant. What seems eloquent to him is foolish babbling to his hearer. The testimony of a drinking man is always untrustworthy.

Wounds Without Cause. Not always the battered face, the broken arm, gashes, bruises and other marks of the saloon brawl. These were enough, but the drunkard must face a wounded conscience, the thought of what might have been, the remembrance of former happiness and prosperity; yes, and the thought of wife and little ones—the real sufferers from his weakness and sin. Like the small-pox patient, the drunkard must carry lifelong scars.

Redness of Eyes. Look at the banquet table when the wine has made its rounds and the laughter and gaiety are at their highest. How the eyes of the young men darken and the orbs of beautiful women glow and sparkle! But it is not long before the eyes wear a lack-lustre look, and become dull and bleary. During five years Prof. Kraepelin, of Heidelberg, Germany, made a series of two thousand experiments, lasting for several months, with instruments of precision, to determine the effect of alcohol on the five special senses. As a result of these experiments he found that where a person of normal vision could read letters of fair size thirty feet away, half an hour after using half a small glass of whiskey he had to be brought within eighteen to twenty-five feet of the letters. Typesetters could not work so rapidly. Colors like crimson and violet that could be seen before were obscured and could no longer be distinguished; this fact first led the railroad companies to impose total abstinence upon those employees whose work in any way related to the signal lights. In the Swedish army it was found that a single glass of wine diminishes accuracy of aim and that all soldiers were more or less unqualified for accurate marksmanship after using wine or beer.

The Answer. Lo, the writer of our lesson has aimed his query so straight that the culprit is discovered! Wine and mixed drink are the cause of all the evils enumerated. Long the liquor traffic has dodged the issue. Ever since the days of Solomon champions of drink have tried to defend the use of intoxicants. At first they refused to acknowledge that drunkenness was more than a harmless lapse from the tedium of life. But drunkenness could not be justified in face of the

Bible edict which placed drunkards with those who could not enter Heaven, and the liquor adherents condemned excess, but defended moderation. Then came science with irrefutable proof that alcohol in the smallest quantity is injurious to body and mind, until now the fight is in the open and the entire liquor system is condemned by God's people.

A Broad Ultimatum. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color to the cup, when it moveth itself aright." This means nothing less than total abstinence from all intoxicants; the prohibition is even stronger, "Look not!" Temptation is to be shunned, there must be no dalliance with an evil so baleful in its results. The power of appetite is so strong that even to look upon wine is the undoing of many a young man. The wine glass should be banished from the social board. The fashionable lady or young woman who proffers wine to her guests becomes a temptress. A compassionate woman once offered a few coins to a drunken beggar and was outraged and startled to have them thrown back in her "Take back your coins," said the drunkard. "If I had returned my first glass of wine which I received from your hands as unceremoniously, I would never have become the drunken, poverty-stricken creature you see today."

"At the Last." What a pathos in those three short words! A once honest youth seeks the saloon and evil associates, and a promising career ends in the prison cell. To the convict's number upon the cell door affix his plea, "Drink Did It." The life of the young man who started out with such bright promise only to disappoint the expectation of parent and friends, is ended; a suicide in the morgue of the city where temptations have been his undoing. His name may be unknown, but it is safe to inscribe upon the coffin plate, "Drink Did It." The gay girl who was so happy in her young wifehood and motherhood and idolized her babe, lies in a drunken sleep while the little one toddles to its death. Write over the brow of the poor creature crazed by the awful awakening to the result of her sinful carelessness, "Drink Did It." The marriage bond of the young couple who plighted troth at the altar has been severed. The once happy bride lies at the feet of her drunken husband, who has slain her. Publish over the gallows from which the poor wretch swings out into eternity, "Drink Did It." "For at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

WOES OF THE DRUNKARD.

Woe unto them that rise up that they strong continue

may follow drink; that until



And the till wine inflame them!



and the



the



and



and wine, are in their



but they regard. not the work of the

Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. Woe unto them that are mighty to



wine, and



of strength to mingle strong drink. Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! ISAIAH 5: 11, 12, 22, 23

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS ISAIAH 5:1-23

Prayer: Dear Lord, May I as an individual, and we as a nation fulfill Thy purpose and exalt Thy righteousness, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

"For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking;
"Tis Heaven alone that is given away,
"Tis only God may be had for the asking."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 760. Place, Jerusalem. Person, Isaiah.

Scripture Setting: Evil consequences of sin. Ill-gotten wealth, Jer. 17:11. Drunkenness rebuked, Joel 1:5. Deceit shortens life, Ps. 55:23. The tempter's punishment, Matthew 18:7. The drink seller's woe, Hab. 2:15.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of the lesson are: 1. The woes of drunkenness as depicted by Isaiah. 2. The prophet's clear-sighted vision of the resultant evils from national debauchery. 3. The fearless arraignment of mighty men. 4. The insecurity of the sinner. 5. The penalties which follow national excesses.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Isaiah, The Gospel Prophet. Because of his prophecies of Christ, the atonement and spread of the gospel throughout the world, Isaiah has been called the gospel prophet. He saw sin in its far-reaching consequences, and in the parable of the vineyard tries to bring Israel to a sense of its ingratitude to the God who had chosen them, delivered them from bondage, destroyed their enemies, given them a good and fertile land and showered blessings upon them. God had bestowed this wonderful care upon Israel that a nation might arise to serve Him in righteousness; and forgetful of all their benefits, His laws were disobeyed, His prophets mocked and heathen abominations committed. They had failed of the purpose for which God had chosen them. The history of our great republic is one of a chosen people, led to a wonderful land of plenty, delivered from enemies without and within by manifold providences. We may well ask, "Are we as a nation fulfilling God's purpose for us?"

The Chief Criminal. What a surgeon Isaiah would have made! With marvelous insight he discerns the inciting cause and in words quick as a flash of steel lays it bare. Lo, the love of money is the root of the mat-"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place." Remove the profits that accrue to the government, and how long would the nation hand its fairest and best over to the saloon? How long would the state build prisons and reformatories for its victims? How long would city or town endure its evil influence if it were not for the license money? Who would rent his property for such purpose, if it were not that the profits of the business enable them to pay higher rents than the others? Because it means easy work and money, men degrade their manhood and over the counter sell death-dealing, soul-destroying poison to their fellows. "That they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." The liquor traffic is the most gigantic trust of today, seeking to own the earth. The choicest corners in the business sections of our cities must be reserved "for the trade;" every other business must accede to its demands. It is trade's fiercest competitor and labor's hardest taskmaster.

Evil Cannot Endure. In the woe pronounced the prophet tells us that the houses of those who seek ill-gotten wealth shall be desolate and that evil gains shall cease. A painting of "Liberty Welcoming the Oppressed of All Nations" adorns the reception hall of a great St. Louis brewery. It cost \$25,000. With broken shackles at her feet and while a former slave sings in gratitude for the emancipation of her race, Liberty extends a welcoming hand to the oppressed from other lands. The guide asked a temperance sightseer if the millions of capital invested, the enormous output of the brewery, and the magnitude of the business did not discourage her. The reply was, "I remember that a generation ago St. Louis was a slave mart; today there is neither slave-holder nor slave in all the land. The liberty wrought in one generation may be extended in the next; a generation hence there will be neither drink seller nor drunkard. Then your picture of Liberty will have to be remodeled; broken beer barrels will be beside the broken shackles at Liberty's feet, while those emancipated from strong drink will join the former slave in a song of gratitude." The discrimination of business firms, railroad and insurance companies against drinking men; the extension of local option and increasing prohibition territory all tend toward the fulfillment of this prediction.

His Own Worst Enemy. "Woe unto them who rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them." Music and gaiety abound and God is wholly disregarded. In no uncertain tones the prophet pictures the fate of individual and nation through luxury, sensuality and drunkenness. The drunkard has always a hard luck tale, Fortune has been against him, his employer is prejudiced, friends misjudged him, when the truth is, the drinking man is his own worst enemy; his misfortunes may be traced to drink; he loses his position because his habits unfit him for continuous labor.

The Mocker. The next woe is pronounced

upon "them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin with a cart rope; that say, Let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come that we may know it." There are persons that mock at righteousness and make a jest of sin. There are people that treat the temperance question as a joke and laugh at the warnings of their elders and the teachings of science. They demand to be shown proof but refuse to accept proof when it is adduced.

Moody and the Bible. A young college student once approached Mr. Moody with the remark, "There is so much in the Bible I cannot understand; give me a Bible that I can understand, Mr. Moody, and I will believe it." The great evangelist looked the callow youth over searchingly and said, "Bless your soul, my dear boy, if you could understand it all I would not believe the Bible."

The Sophist. As some thieves seek first to blind their intended victims by throwing a dangerous acid in their eyes, so Satan blinds the conscience and confuses the spiritual vision. Beware of "them who call evil good and good evil: that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." The one who assures you that it is all right to disobey a father's commands, or ignore a mother's advice: the one who sees "no harm" in smoking, drinking and other evils, is an unsafe companion. The arguments in favor of personal liberty and the regulation and license of evil are sophistry and they may be classed under this third woe.

The Prudent Man. According to all God's teachings, His servants are to make no terms or compromise with evil. His first commandment to the first man was a prohibition with death penalty attached. "Look not behind thee" was the command laid upon Lot and his family, but Lot's wife disregarded the prohibition to her own destruction. Achan's purpose to share in the spoils of evil and disregard of God's command to in no wise touch the unclean thing, brought defeat upon his people. Saul thought to consecrate the proceeds of his disobedience to the Lord, but Samuel's stern edict was "To obey is better than sacrifice" and the kingdom passed from Saul's house forever. Those statesmen and parties who would bargain for evil may seem "wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight" but it were wiser to follow the example of the Chinese Emperor who refused to legalize the sale of opium, declaring, "I cannot receive any revenue from that which causes misery and suffering to my people."

The Final Woe. So many parties are included in Isaiah's final woe that it might be termed a "blanket" indictment. If we adapt it to modern times, it covers the drinker, the drink seller and the licenser of drink. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine"—not mighty in valor, strength and true manliness, but mighty to drink wine. The woe may not be through the Divine wrath; drink fixes its own penalty; it may be loss of health, a wrecked mind or dulled ambition that doom the drinking man to failure.

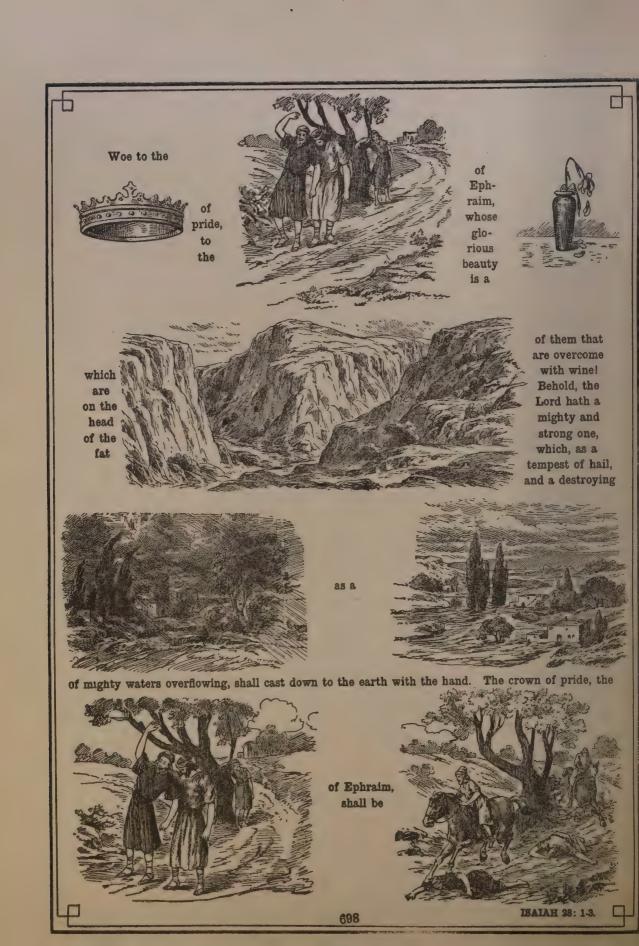
Men of Strength to Mingle Strong Drink. May we not depart from the prophet's original meaning and apply this description to the manufacturers and dispensers of strong drink? There are three quarters of a million persons engaged in the manufacture and sale of liquor in the United States. More dangerous than any foreign foe who may attack the nation's coast line; a greater drain upon the people's money than the largest standing army we could possibly recruit; more deadly in its destructive work than the most costly navy-is this great army, with one out of every hundred and twenty impressed in its service. It is an army enlisted under the seal and with the consent of our government. Above every one of the saloon bars in this country are two documents, the one bearing the seal of the United States, and the other, the sanction of the commonwealth: they are the enlistment papers under which these soldiers of evil serve—the federal tax receipt and the municipal license, which state that for the payment of a stated sum of money, the wretched business has been made as lawful as the sale of food and other necessaries of life. For revenue, "We, the people," permit this great army to attack the home of the nation, despoil our daughters and ruin our sons. Truly, "woe is unto them which justify the wicked for a reward."

Quiz. 1. What is Isaiah's rank as a prophet?
2. What king was Isaiah's friend? 3. What can you tell of the parable of the vineyard? 4. What nations of ancient times passed into decay through drunkenness? 5. Are any of the woes pronounced by Isaiah applicable to our times?

by Isaiah applicable to our times?

Seed Thoughts. 1. The money in the business is the liquor traffic's tower of strength. 2. Money wrongly gotten carries its own curse. 3. Right is ever right and wrong is always wrong. 4. Sophistry is the devil's ablest lieutenant. 5. The wisdom of the world is folly and abomination to God. 6. Many a young man has started out in life to make a name for himself only to gain a reputation as a drunkard.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS ISAIAH 28:1-18; READ ALSO MATTHEW 7:24-29.

Prayer: Lord, Help me to build my life on nothing less than the rock of Thy righteousness, with Christ as the cornerstone of every endeavor, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Time, B. C. 712. Place, Historical Setting: Isaiah, Persons. the priests and Jerusalem.

Scripture Setting: Duties of those who direct the affairs of state. Temperance commended, Eccl. 10:16. Why rulers should be sober, Prov. 31:4. Character required, Dan. 6:3. A rewarder of good, Prov. 14:35. The friend of the people, Ps. 72:4. Should be just, Jer. 22:3.

Life and Conduct Setting: The prophet shows that, 1. Neither wealth, architecture nor com"Thy Kingdom come, O Savior great, In hearts and homes, in church and state; But ere it comes, full well we know, Saloons, saloons, saloons must go."

manding position make a city. 2. Drunkenness in high places causes the overthrow of municipality and nation. 3. The security of the righteous, "He that believeth shall not make haste." 4. That a drunken official is always a faithless public servant. 5. That God is not mocked. 6. The danger of an unholy alliance. 7. The futility of falsehood and dishonest diplomacy. 8. That God requires righteousness of public officials. The sure foundation whose cornerstone is Christ.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE.

A City on a Hill. King Omri could have chosen no better site for the capital of Israel than Samaria. Built on a hill and surrounded on every side by hills clothed with olive and vine; the rich, fertile valleys and a view of the Mediterranean disclosed by the lower hills to the west, added to the charm of position. Isaiah likens Samaria to the glorious crown of this marvelously rich and fertile country. Many kings had added to the grandeur and beauty of its adornment. It was not only the residence but the burial place of Israel's kings, marked by costly mausoleums and sepulchres. But, alas, a great temple of Baal stood in Israel's capital, while in every grove and under widespreading trees were altars and images of false gods. Religion was scorned, righteousness no longer the rule of life and drunkenness so wide-spread and common as to be a national sin and woe upon the proud city and nation.

Storm Swept. Isaiah is using no strange picture when he likens God's judgment to the bursting of a tropical storm. His hearers are familiar with such scenes of sudden devastation. Lightning flashes, clouds gather with amazing rapidity, hail and rain drive down the valleys, and violent streams flow from every gorge and carry destruction with them, where a moment before sunny skies and balmy air promised perpetual summer. Such is the fancied security of the sinner. The over-taxed stomach, the poisoned brain of the alcohol drinker suddenly revolt and lifelong pain and torture result. God's judgments may or may not come with rapid force, but they are ever unerring and final. Within five years after Isaiah's prophecy was delivered there was no longer a kingdom of Israel. Samaria was many times rebuilt and demolished, but the woe of its crimes rested upon it and its ruins alone remain. The city

was "overcome with wine." Samaria and Jerusalem, Nineveh and Babylon have fallen. Will not the great cities of today which imitate their vices meet with a like fate?

The Survivors. But there is a saving remnant who face this whirlwind unmoved. Isaiah tells us they are those who sought Divine wisdom and strength to perform the daily duties of life and fulfill the obligation of office. By "them that turn the battle at the gate" was meant either to drive back the enemy through the fortified gates by which he had entered the city or even to the enemy's own gate, the greatest of all bravery, since it meant to wrest victory from defeat. The true servant of God has nothing to fear. There are men whom the outbursts of popular indignation against public graft and immorality leave unscathed; they are like the giant sequors of California, that, having withstood the storms of centuries, still tower above their fellows.

Priest. Prophet and Judge. It was the priest's sacred office to act between Jehovah and man, to offer sacrifice and oblation for the people. To the prophet was given sacred moments when the spirit of God rested upon him with such power as to enable him to give timely warning of disaster and evil. priestly judges sat in a commission with the most difficult and important cases to decide. Surely, priest, prophet and judge should have been men of clear brain and unerring wisdom. In the choice of our rulers and judges are we guided by the warning of Solomon, "It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."

Overcome Through Wine. Jerusalem is no better than Samaria; so widespread is the vice of drunkenness, that even priests and prophets are addicted to drink. Judges are

so overcome with wine that they decide against the innocent and shield the guilty. Alas, that even since Isaiah's time, the church has not always been free from drunkenness.

Better Things. Less than a hundred years ago an old preacher used to so time his visits as to remain over Sunday with a godly family in a certain Connecticut village. The old man would preach to the little community, and Monday morning adjust his saddle bag, mount his horse and drive off on his regular business, which was to sell liquors to the country tavern keepers; neither preacher nor congregation saw any inconsistency. Today, not only the ministry, but all the forces of the church are arrayed against the traffic in intoxicating drinks.

In the Wallow. If any one disbelieves Isaiah's charges, let him visit the tables where these dignitaries sit; all the tables are full of filthy vomit. Music, light, flowers and tinsel show give allurement to vice, but the glamour aside, and the wallow in all its filth is revealed. Many a stage-struck girl learns too late the awful realities behind the footlights; and many a boy learns to his ruin that gambling is attended by the swift certainty of loss. The painted beauty shows her brazen hideousness when her prey has been drawn to destruction. Drunkenness has been called a bestial sin, but

"Who has ever heard of a poor old horse, That had to go reeling home?

Who ever heard of a drunken cow? Or even a tipsy cat?"

Jest Turned to Earnest. The prophetic warning is derided. "Who is this preacher talking to? Does he think we are babies just weaned, or little children taking our first lesson in words, that precept must be upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little?" In drunken mimicry, they call Isaiah's reiteration, stammering. It is a remarkable fact that the language of the Assyrians, to whom their nation later fell a prey, bore a marvelous resemblance to the stammering jargon with which these drunken scoffers derided God's prophet. The sins of their own youth confront parents in their children. The sensual seeker after pleasure loses all sense of enjoyment. The drunkard is swallowed up of wine until he loses all likeness to his former self, and resembles nothing so much as an animated whisky or beer keg.

Character Building. Unconsciously these scoffers enunciated a great truth. All great reforms have

small beginnings. When the W. C. T. U. conceived the idea of securing a generation of total abstainers through the teaching of the evil effects of alcohol and other narcotics in the public schools, the liquor interests scoffed at these teachers of babies. Today twenty-five millions of school children in the United States receive temperance education and practically all of the civilized nations pay some attention to temperance teaching in the schools, and recently a liquor organ stated that the most dangerous menace to the liquor business is the temperance teaching in the schools.

A Covenant with Death. The politicians of Jerusalem scorned Isaiah's threat of destruction. Instead of making the Lord their helper, they had formed a secret alliance with Egypt while in open alliance with Assyria. It was a refuge of lies with falsehood for its foundation. No wonder our prophet calls it a covenant with death and with hell. "I pray you read the 28th of Isaiah from the 5th to the 15th verses," Oliver Cromwell wrote to the politicians of his time. May we not refer those politicians of today who for revenue and gain would have our government continue its covenant with the saloon, to the same message? Falsehood, cunning and diplomacy are an insecure foundation for individual or national security.

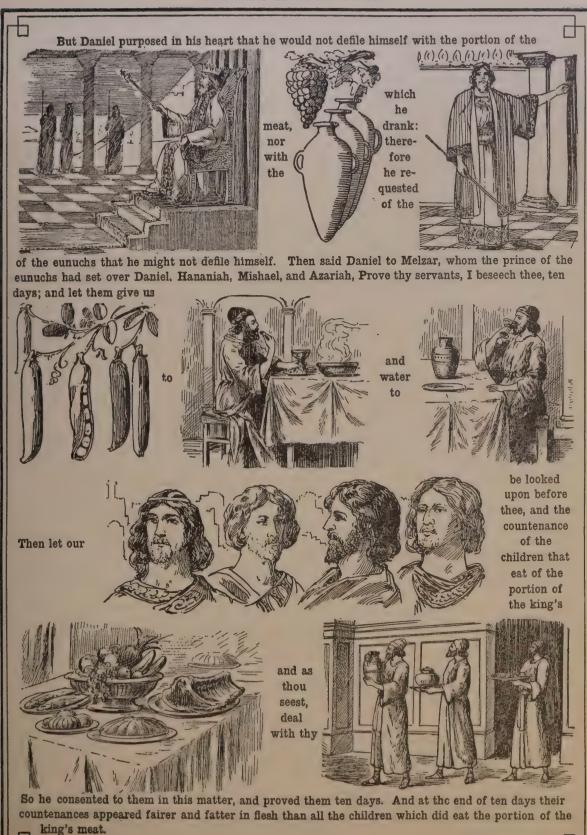
The True Foundation and Its Cornerstone. Having shown the judgment which must follow upon such evil conduct, and upon how false a foundation they are building their hopes of security, he points them to righteousness and truth as the sure foundation and prophecies of Christ as the precious cornerstone, and of the confidence, peace and security of those who trust the Everlasting Savior. "I tried every cure for drunkenness," testified a reformed man, "and all failed; then I sought the Christ cure, and it has kept me sober."

Quiz. 1. Of what nation was Samaria the capital? 2. Who built Jerusalem and of what people was it the capital? 3. To what fruit does Isaiah liken Samaria? 4. In what parable does Christ warn us to build on a rock? 5. To whom did Christ declare himself the rock?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Drunkenness can undermine the greatest prosperity. 2. Any craft can stand fair weather, but to weather a nor easter proclaims its seaworthiness. 3. God is not only a source of honor, but of wisdom and strength to those who rely upon him. 4. Former goodness cannot save a man from present sin. 5. Wine swallows them who swallow it. 6. Many a jest is turned to earnest. 7. A lie never saves a situation. 8. He who hides behind a falsehood, hides like the ostrich. 9. Christ is the cornerstone of every real success.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

DANIEL IN BABYLON.



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DAN. 1: 8, 11-15.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS DANIEL 1:3-21. READ ALSO CHAPTERS 3 AND 6.

Prayer: Dear Lord, May we follow the process of Divine growth, growing strong in spirit as we increase in physical stature, and placing the favor of God before that of man, knowing that then will our bodies be fit temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"When I was young I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood,
Nor did with unblushful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore mine age is as a lusty winter—
Frosty yet kindly."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 606. Place, Babylon. Persons, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; Ashpenaz, prince of the eunuchs; Melzar, the steward; Daniel and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (known later as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), Jewish youths of noble lineage.

Scripture setting: Young Men of Clean Life. Joseph in the house of Potiphar, Gen. 39:7-23; Moses preferring the people of God to the treasures of Egypt, Heb. 11:24-27. Samuel's innocence beside the corrupting example of Eli's sons, 1 Sam. 3:1-13. David's boyhood as a shepherd lad, 1 Sam. 16:11-13. The boy Christ, subject to His parents in Nazareth, Luke 2:40-52. Timothy, beloved by Paul, 2 Tim. 1:2-5.

Life and Conduct Setting: This story is as modern as if just from the press, and should be presented in the present tense. Its special features are the statesmanship of king Nebuchadnezzar in his provision for the training of the captive Jewish youths; his shrewd foresight in the rigid requirements regarding physical and intellectual endowment. The courage manifested by Daniel, the hero of the story, and his three companions. The successful test, proving then as now, that alcohol is not necessary to health, and detrimental to intellectual growth. The necessity of a purpose in life. The final triumph and success of the four youths who trusted and obeyed God in all the emergencies of life.

A SCHOOL IN THE KING'S PALACE.

King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, establishes a school of civic instruction for those Jewish lads of noble descent who are captives through the defeat of king Jehoiakim and the fall of Jerusalem. Competent instructors are chosen and the school is the king's own palace, the vast palace whose ruins are now called Kasr. A position awaits each fortunate lad, since the school is to train the pages of the royal court. The king's own personal attendants are to be chosen from among them. Youth is a school, boyhood a period of training, and every boy of brawn, brain and character has a position and promotion awaiting him, in factory, workshop, farm, business or professional life.

Boys Wanted. Though friendless captives and in exile, opportunity depends only on the ability of these Jewish lads to meet the requirements of the king. They must be of perfect physical development, high intellectual attainment and unusual ability. It is the world-wide demand of today. Boys Wanted! Friendlessness, adversity, misfortune, never have been and are not now a barrier to opportunity and preferment. The standard is even higher and more stringent than in Daniel's time. The lad who would win will find strength, character and ability of more importance than powerful friends, influence or wealth.

Temptation. Temptations await these boys—the temptation to cowardice, conformity and coarser sins. Heathen customs pre-

vail in the king's palace. Even the meat which is a part of the king's daily provisions has been killed with blood contrary to Mosaic law, and offered to idols. Will these lads have the courage to stand by their early training and observe the Jewish religious rites, or will they disobey God and conform to the heathen practices about them? How many boys smoke just because their associates do, and how many accept the first glass through the desire to be like others! Even the luxury in which they were placed, leads to the grosser temptation of drunkenness. Let no boy whine over poverty and privation as a handicap. Franklin, Lincoln, Garfield, Edison, Westinghouse and many great men have risen from poverty. Luxury, selfindulgence and excess lead to failure.

The Hero. Among these boys was a hero, with a purpose in life and courage to declare it. It was the purpose of the young Washington, who, at a public banquet given at Ft. Duquesne, refused to drink the health of General Braddock, under whom he had served, in deference to the promise made his mother; the purpose of Lincoln whose promise to a dying mother was confirmed in later youth by the signing of a temperance pledge. All his comrades might drink the king's wine and eat the king's meat with no desire above self-indulgent pleasure, but Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Three companions are of the same



BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST BY JOHN MARTIN

The Persian king, Belshazzar, made a great feast, for a thousand of his lords, and commanded to be brought out the costly vessels of gold and silver which had been stolen from the temple at Jerusalem, by his father Nebuchadnezzar. As this was an insult to the God of Israel, for whose worship these

vessels existed, the Lord was wroth.

Suddenly, in the midst of the feast, a hand appeared and wrote on the wall a sentence, the multitude not knowing from whence the hand came. The king was startled and his knees smote together in fear. He called on the astrologers of Caldea, that they might explain the writing, but they could not, though promised clothing of scarlet and a chain of gold. At this moment the queen came into the banquet hall and told the king of Daniel and his miraculous wisdom. Daniel, when called, read the writing: "Mene, Mene," God has finished thy kingdom; "Tekel," Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting; "Peres," Thy kingdom is divided; "Upharsan" is another word for Peres and means the same thing. So Daniel was clothed in scarlet and a golden chain was placed about his neek (much against his will) and he was made the third ruler in the kingdom. The king was slain that night.

In the picture, by Martin, an Englishman, we see the open court of an enormous palace of elaborate architecture, and its lines of multitudinous lamps. On the right parapet stands the candelabrum of the seven lights, stolen from the temple of Jerusalem, also the sacred vessels. Below these on a raised platform is a group of the king and his officers and women, showing terror and confusion. At the right on the opposite wall is a blast of light where the writing was made. Upon a raised platform in the center there are people by a table that is also laden with the stolen vessels, and in the center stands a figure, in dark clothing, addressing the king. This is Daniel translating the wording of the inscription. The people seem to be in great terror and on every side we see prostrate forms. Down below in the center of the court people are prostrating themselves before a heathen image where sacrificial fires are blazing. Overhead the sky is disturbed with writhing clouds suggesting atmospheric disturbances, and the young moon glimmers amid them. We see many statues and pedestals, and beyond them the mysterious forms of great buildings. -JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON



BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST



mind. These four princely boys determined to observe the religion of their fathers and abstain from all luxuries in which lurked pollution. Thrice daily does Daniel pray to his God, who will with the temptation also make a way to escape. Dependence on God breeds true independence.

The Request. They beg to live on pulse and water rather than the luxuries of the king's table. An unheard-of request in Babylon! Like some who still ascribe food qualities to alcohol, Ashpenaz fears his young charges will become so thin and haggard that when Nebuchadnezzar compares their appearance with that of their fellows, his own head will pay the forfeit, and he refuses the request.

Illustration: As late as 1840, a Quaker, Robert Warner, in London applied for life insurance and was told by all the London insurance companies he would have to pay ar extra premium because he was a total abstainer. Today insurance companies accept the total abstainer at a lower rate because statistics prove his greater longevity.

The Test. The boy of correct habits is always esteemed by men, so it is not surprising to learn that Daniel is the favorite of the steward in charge; so when he begs Melzar to try the experiment for ten days the request is granted. They use water instead of wine and eat vegetables, dates, raisins. and other fruits, generally called pulse. Nor, in the light of recent experiments, are we surprised that, at the end of the ten days. they are fairer and fleshier than all their comrades. Food builds bone, muscle, flesh and nerves, gives heat to the body and power to work and think. Alcohol does none of these. Even the fattening which sometimes attends its use is often a fatty degeneration of the vital organs. Indeed that alcohol has no real food value is now so well known that all members of football, baseball and other athletic teams must undergo Daniel's test, foregoing the use of all intoxicating drinks during the athletic season and often throughout the entire year.

The Final Examination. After several years Ashpenaz presents his young pages to Nebuchadnezzar for the final examination tests, which are personally conducted by the The four Jewish lads who have a purpose in life, not only excel all the other boys, but are ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers, who are the statesmen and scholars of their day. Daniel has understanding of visions and dreams, to | world honors are those who honor God.

which the Chaldeans attach supreme importance. Each succeeding generation should improve upon the one before it. The opportunities of the American boy of today are ten times greater than that of his father, and the boy who fails to profit by them has decreed his own failure in life. The knowledge of chemistry, steam and electricity now demanded of the intelligent workman would have been deemed magic in the days of Babylon. The nation demands a higher citizenship than ever before. It requires greater statesmanship to be mayor of New York today than to be president of the United States a generation ago.

The Reward. God recognizes the constancy of these four lads. Because these boyish heroes remain clean and pure, Babylon learns a lesson of simplicity and of the beauty of holiness which later leads king Nebuchadnezzar to acknowledge the superiority of Daniel's God. A pure life is the Christian's strongest testimony to a sinful world. Through Divine favor they are advanced to the highest honors. At seventeen Daniel is made a satrap, at twenty-two Nebuchadnezzar places him over the whole province of Babylon, at thirty-four he is Prime Minister of Babylon and Persia. Under three different nationalities and dynasties he holds a position of authority among the haughtiest aristocracies of the world. Through the insanity of one king and the murder of two of his successors. Daniel continued, surviving the exile, to see God's restoration of His people to Jerusalem, and at a great age hears the "Well done" of the Master. "Them that honor Me will I honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." Washington praying at Valley Forge, Lincoln in prayer during the Civil war, Gladstone praying beside a friendless boy, were like Daniel, godly men who honored God through pure lives, and served

Quiz. What great test of obedience and trial of his constancy did Daniel meet? How did his three companions afterward manifest their courage and devotion to God? How were they delivered? What other boys of the Bible maintained their purity amid temptation? How do the lives of these Bible heroes conform to the childhood and boyhood of Christ? How can you make your life conform to His? How

their country with clear brains.

find help in time of temptation?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Opportunity comes to all. 2.
Follow the law of God rather than the law of social usage. 3. Alcohol never helped anyone and has harmed many. 4. Temperance leads to success. Never be afraid to be alone in the right. 6. In the midst of every temptation live as in God's sight. 7. Prayer defeats temptation. 8. The men whom the

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

Belshazzar the king made a great



to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before

the thousand. Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver



which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the



which was in Jerusalem; that the



and his



his



and his concubines. might drink therein. Then brought they the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was at

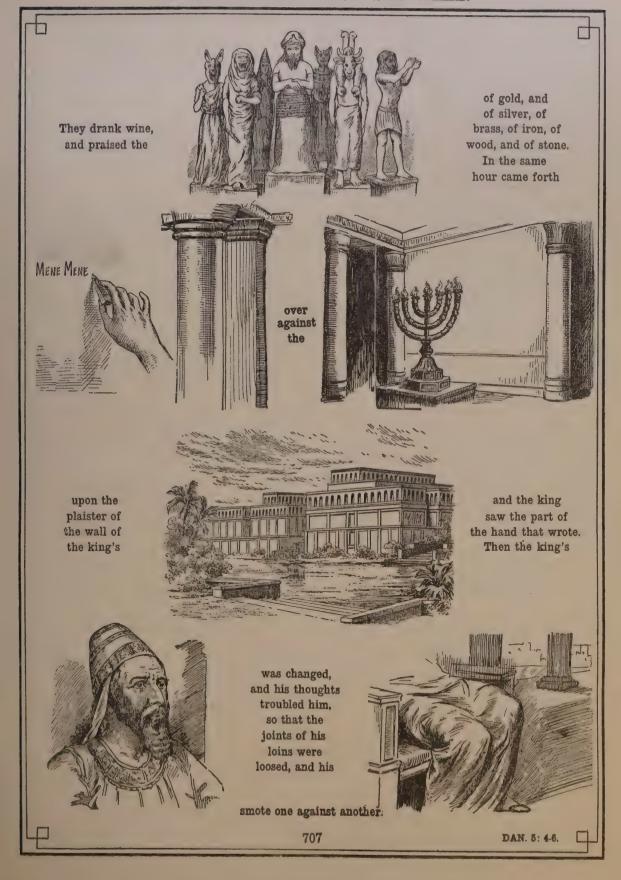


and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines. drank in them.

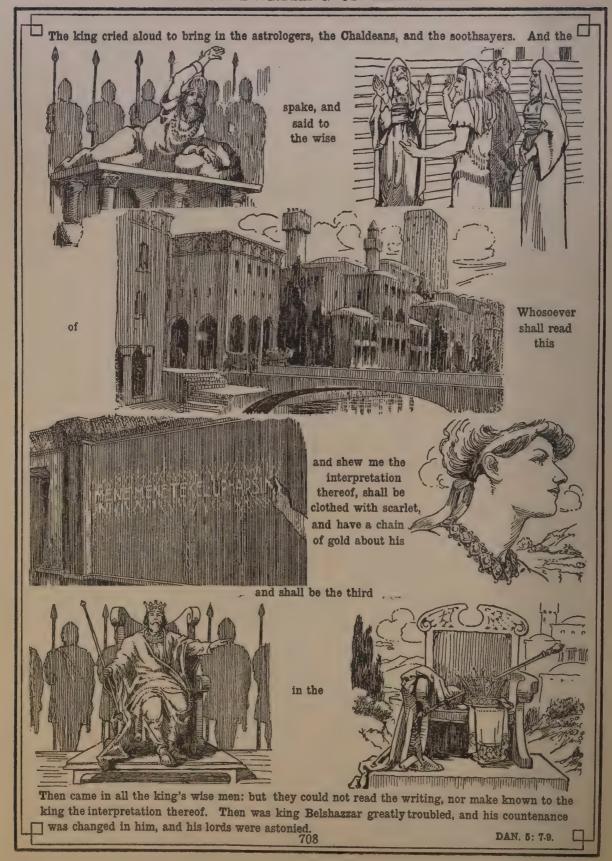
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DAN. 5: 1-3.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.



THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS DANIEL 5. READ ALSO ESTHER 1. AND 5:8-14.

Prayer: The Lord help us to ever pray, Lead us not into temptation. May we be temperate in all things, eschewing that which is evil. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Shall the record be "Found wanting," or shall it be "Found trusting" while the hand is writing on the wall?

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 570. Place, Babylon. Persons, Belshazzar, his wives, courtiers and attendants, the queen mother, and Daniel.

attendants, the queen mother, and Daniel.
Scripture Setting: Banquets of Wine, and Results. Ahasuerus' banquet, Esth. 1. Herod's banquet, Mark 6:14-28. Wine a mocker, Prov. 20:1. Warning against, Prov. 23:20-21. A time to do evil, 2 Sam. 13:28. Elah's death, 1 Kings 16:9.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of this story are: 1. The drunken revelry of Belshazzar and his court. 2. Their impious profanation

of the sacred vessels of God's holy temple. 3. The fearful apparition, showing how Divine mercy would not cut off even the most impious ruler without a warning which might awaken a sinner to repentance.

4. Belshazzar's transformation from the proud king to the trembling, tottering, shrinking coward. 5. The impotency of the diviners. 6. The devotion and wise counsel of the queen mother. 7. Daniel's reappearance at court and superiority over all the soothsayers and astrologers. 8. The king's doom is foretold by the interpretation of the handwriting.

A FEAST THAT COST A KING HIS KINGDOM.

Belshazzar. Since the term "Father," as applied in the story to Nebuchadnezzar, signifies only royal predecessor, historians are in doubt as to the identity of Belshazzar, some seeing a likeness to the sinful revelry and tragic end of the wicked, half-maddened king, Antiochus Epiphanes. But we may accept the assumption that Belshazzar was the son of king Nabonidus, one of the successors of king Nebuchadnezzar. The father, a shy man, avoided Babylon, permitting Belshazzar to carry on the work of government as prince regent, a king in all save name only. According to numerous Babylonian contract tablets, Belshazzar was a man of great wealth, transacting business on legal principles. So we have not the picture of an effeminate spendthrift, but of a ruler of executive ability, a hard-headed man of business, defying God, using his wealth in profligacy

and evil living.

A Gorgeous Scene. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand. The banqueting hall in that palace was a wonder to the world, with its winged statues and splendid spacious halls. The walls were rich with images of gorgeous coloring. Belshazzar's princes were there. There were women in gay attire, music and dancers. Wine flowed freely. Intoxication was no disgrace in that circle. Alas that at the present day such scenes are re-enacted.

Profane Reveling. Now Belshazzar must have known of the majesty of the God of Israel and of the sacredness of the vessels which had been carried from His holy temple, and he must have known of Daniel, a man of the same age as his father. It may have been a knowledge of the clean lives of those four Jewish youths in his predeces-

sor's court which inspired the prayer that has been found on one of the Babylonian tablets, still extant, the prayer of king Nabonidus for his son, "Cause Thy great Divinity to exist in his heart; may Thy great love help him not to give way to sin; may he be satisfied with life's abundance." Alas for the son who forgets the prayers of his father and disappoints a father's wishes. Only a short time before, Nebuchadnezzar, restored from the humiliation which had befallen his sinful and arrogant pride, had publicly acknowledged and honored the true God, yet in the flush of his pride and drunkenness, despite Nebuchadnezzar's warning-"Those that walk in pride He is able to abase''—whiles he tasted the wine, Belshazzar ordered the sacred vessels to be brought that he and his fellow revelers might drink wine from them. To add insult to the most High, they praised the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone; but The God who held all life in His hand, they praised or glorified not. Intemperance leads to irreligion, Sabbath desecration, profanity and disobedience of every law of God. The saloon and its followers hold nothing sacred, not only trampling on God's laws, but disregarding all law.

The Spectral Hand. It is characteristic of the Divine mercy that even sinners must have a last warning with opportunity for repentance. Seated on his jeweled throne, Belshazzar's eye caught something vividly pictured on the white stucco of the wall. He saw it over the lights which crowned the huge golden chandelier. The fingers of a dark and bodiless hand were writing letters on the wall. No young man ever becomes a drunkard without a warning hand being held out to him. It may be God's Holy

Word, a father's prayer, a mother's entreaties, the awful example of the drunkard. At the present time the warning is given through the teaching of the evil effects of alcohol, tobacco and other narcotics, on the human system, in our public schools. Conscience is a warning monitor that God has given each of us.

The King Undone. The former proud and boastful king becomes a poor, abject, terror-stricken creature. He cannot read the handwriting on the wall, but his thoughts trouble him; the sins of a life-time confront him; he trembles visibly; so great is his agitation that the jeweled bands of his attire are loosed; his knees smite one against the other in very weakness. He cries out in a loud voice. What loathsome, terrible things are seen by the poor vic-tim of delirium tremens! Alas for the man before whom conscience holds a life made hideous by sin! What a contrast is Belshazzar's cowardice to the courage of those three Jewish youths thrust into the fiery furnace, or of Daniel in the lion's den. Alcohol is a tyrant who makes slaves and cowards of his devotees. Strong drink transforms many a princely youth into a miserable abject creature, piteous in his weakness.

Soothsayers Helpless. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew to whom to appeal when in trouble, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us." Belshazzar cries aloud to the astrologers and soothsayers. Vain indeed in the help of men. These dream interpreters are as helpless and impotent as those in Moses' time, or as those fortune-tellers and clairvoyants of our time who claim to read the future to credulous patrons. Not one is able to divine the meaning of those portentious words which still blaze in letters of fire. Those who seek earthly help in trou-

ble are often disappointed.

Behold a Man. Some rumor, therefore, of this confusion must have reached the queen mother who was not present at the banquet. It is conjectured that she did not approve of the sinful revel, but how like a mother, to come to her son in his distress, forgiving and forgetting all his misdeeds. It reminds us of that beautiful promise of God, "As one whom his mother comforteth, I will comfort you." Be assured that your mother is your truest friend, tenderest comforter, and wisest counselor. She enters and bids Belshazzar to be no longer troubled, for "There is a man who will be able to read this fearful augury as he has done others before." When in distress even the most wicked men turn from their evil associates to some good man whose worth is recognized. The vile and evil companions who are so engaging to the boy will prove poor friends in the time of

Daniel Before the King. Glibly, Belshaz-

zar promises him those things which he deems of greatest value, a scarlet robe, a golden chain and office, but Daniel, who has ever rated earthly things at their true value, waves them aside—"The world offers nothing of value comparable with the rewards which God bestows upon His children."

Pride Goeth Before a Fall. Daniel remembers and reminds him of the powerful and mighty Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, and that in spite of all this, which was known unto Belshazzar, the latter, in his infatuated pride, had praised false gods which see not, nor hear, nor know; profaned the holy vessels of the temple with drunken revelry, insulting and disregarding the Most High God, "in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways." We may ignore God,—He is still the arbiter of our fate.

Weighed and Found Wanting. Not alone Belshazzar's, but every life is weighed in the balance. Our conduct and our character is measured by those about us. Sin leaves its handwriting on the face; the drunkard's bloated face, the brutalized countenance of the prize fighter, these are the handwriting on the wall, written not in mystic letters, but in coarse print, that all may read. Be assured that secret sins and impure thoughts are also recorded and discernible though written in fine script. Every deed and thought, even though unknown to man, is recorded, and the writing is the handwriting of God; the record the Book of Life, and by the works recorded we shall be known and judged, even as Belshazzar.

Speedy Retribution, "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain," Babylon was taken by night, while the drunken inhabitants were reveling. Under a drunken ruler the most powerful and mighty city in the world fell without a stroke, and two days later the Persian army entered Babylon without a sign of resistance. Such is the story of Belshazzar. Are we not all kings, living in a castle more wonderful than any royal palace built by man: a body created and formed by the King of kings. Every organ in these bodies of ours is as sacred as the sacred vessels of old. If we abuse them with wine, we profane and weaken them, and insult God by defiling the body which He has made to be a temple for the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. Retribution may not come so speedily, but science has demonstrated that al-

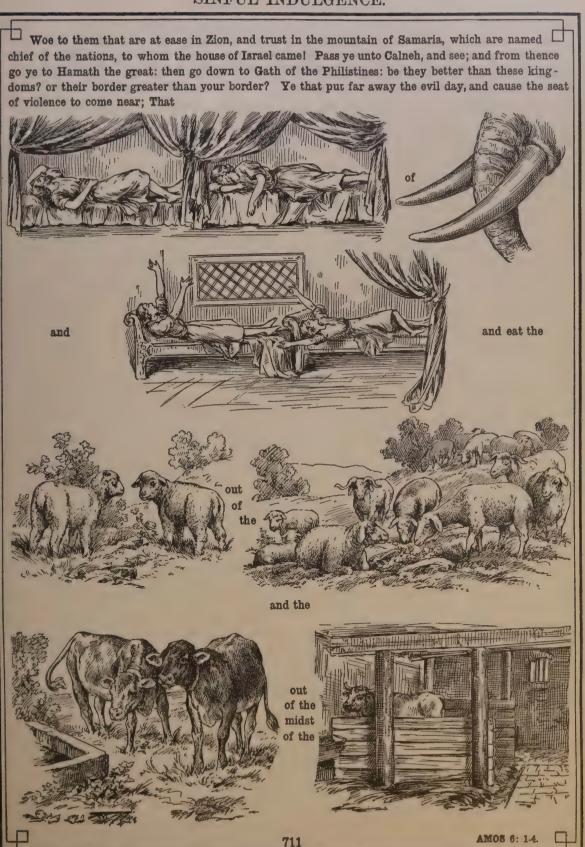
cohol is poisonous in its action upon the different parts of the body, weakens the will and ultimately enslaves. Strong as is our nation, it is doomed to fall like Babylon unless its laws are built upon righteousness, its rulers God-fearing men, and its citizens sober and clean.

Seed Thoughts. 1. Wealth and position should be used as opportunity for good. 2. Wine is a mocker, mocking God. 3. Sin makes cowards of

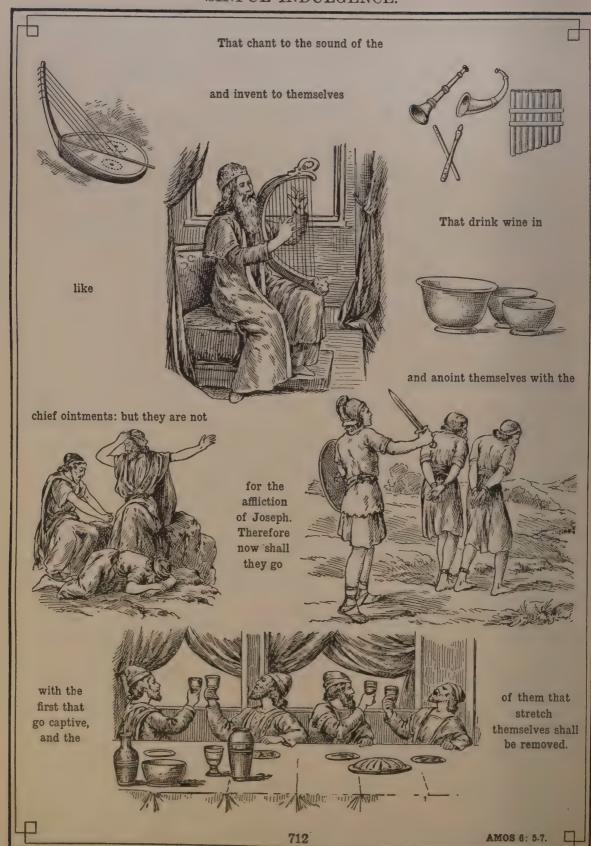
us all. 4. Perfect love casteth out fear. 5. A mother is a more loyal friend than any reveling companion. 6. A shining character can never be eclipsed: Daniel was great in obscurity as before the king's throne. 7. Thoughts and deeds are written on the countenance. Each face is but the out-

door sign of the heart within.

SINFUL INDULGENCE.



SINFUL INDULGENCE.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS AMOS 6:1-12.

Prayer: Lord, Help us to seek first the King dom of Heaven and its righteousness, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

"Man's inhumanity to man Makes countless thousands mourn."

Historical Setting: Time, B. C. 755. Place, Bethel. Persons, Amos, a prophet of God; Jeroboam II, his courtiers and men and women of

fashion.
Scripture Setting: Sins of omission. Ingrati tude, Gen. 40:21-23. Ignorance, Lev. 5:15-19. Unthankfulness, Num. 21:1-6. Acquiescence in evil, I Sam. 3:13-14. Irreligion, I Kings, 11:11. Rejection of God, Matt. 23:37. Lack of charity, Matt. 25:35-46. Lack of consideration for suffering, Luke 10:30-37. Indifference, Luke 7:44-47. Lukewarmness, Rev. 3:14-18.

Life and Conduct Setting: 1. In our lesson, the prophet denounces the false security of professing followers of God. 2. Makes it plain it will not avail man simply to avow the true religion unless its truths are applied to conduct. 3. Shows that no one may hope to evade the penalties that have been imposed on others. 4. Gives a vivid description of sensuous luxury, which has a hardening influence on character. 5. Declares consideration for the sorrows of others and beneficence to the poor are a part of religion. 6. Portrays the judgments of God with startling vividness.

THE CRIME OF INDIFFERENCE.

The Shepherd of Tekoa. A lonely, desolate place was Tekoa. The straggling village built on the site of an ancient camp looked out on a harsh, colorless and desolate world, almost surrounded by gray limestone hills and beyond the gray mountain lines, a faint suggestion of the gray towers of Jerusalem. The vegetation, the brown withered grass and shrub of the desert; a dreamy world whose only sound the howl of wild beasts by night and of a few lonely desert caravans by day. Here our hero lives, a peasant, tending sheep during the season and in the autumn earning a mere subsistence by cutting and dressing and purveying the sycamore fruit, a small, sweet, but watery fig, to the poor. But bits of blue sky could be seen between the ragged hills; at night the stars, and at sunset and sunrise, the gray mountains were bathed in glory. God was in the desert.

Taken from the Flocks. A lonely, solitary man is this herdsman, who hears the voice of the Lord as the "roar of a lion," "Go, prophesy unto my people, Israel." John the Baptist was also desert bred. There is no life so lonely as to be unknown to God, no solitude so great that it cannot be pierced by the voice of God. We may not say, "I live in such a remote place and am so insignificant and far from the great world that I have no mission, no call to service, no work to do for Christ and humanity."

Bethel, the Seat of a New Cult. Now, Jeroboam I served God for earthly reward only. He knew that the kingdom had been divided and had passed from Solomon's house because that great king had permitted and even built altars to false gods, and a prophet of God had told Jeroboam that the length of his reign depended on obedience to God. In his heart, he cherished the gods of Egypt, and sought to unite the true and

the false religion by setting up two golden calves at Bethel and Dan as emblems of the great Jehovah. It was a masterstroke of diplomacy. He worshipped God, but bowed before his golden calves. Moreover, the new religion was popular. All Israel "as one man" resorted to it. A great temple was built at Bethel, where the kings worshiped. Here, public prayer was made to God amid heathen rites and sacrifices. Thus the world has ever tried to serve God and its own desires. New religions are constantly springing up which are man-made cults, uniting the false and the true. Even some Christians worship at Bethel, professing God's name and bowing before false images of wealth and position.

The Prophet Appears. Everywhere is marked prosperity and luxury. The king and his retinue are at the royal palace near the temple, flushed with conquest and drunk with wine. The real God who had loaded them with benefits is forgotten. There is no truth, no justice or mercy left in the land. Crime is on every hand. The army is debauched, judges corrupt, priests drunken, rulers impoverishing the people, and men grown rich by unjust gains, dishonesty and robbing the poor. Are not those evils pres-

ent today?

But suddenly—it may have been on one of the numerous holidays of pagan worship -a mountaineer in rude peasant's dress appears before the temple and denounces the crimes and corruption of the great. Under the shadow of the palace the man prophesies the destruction of the kingdom. A few look in supercilious wonder at the rough garb of the herdsman, but others recognize the man; he is known to the king. It is Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa. There are men in every generation, usually lonely men with the vision of the desert, who, unawed

by wealth, and unafraid of corruption in high places, dare to call a spade a spade. We call them cranks and fanatics at first, but later we enroll them as patriots and men of God.

At Ease in Zion. The prophet's warning included the worshipers at the true temple in Jerusalem as well as those of Bethel; "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust to the mountains of Samaria." It matters not what your creed, or to what sect you belong; if the cause that needs assistance, and the wrongs that need resistance are ignored, our proplet is speaking to you. We are our brother's keeper, and we may not plead ignorance as did Cain.

not plead ignorance as did Cain.

History Repeats Itself. Other nations have fallen, other peoples have been taken captive. "Are you better than they?" demands the prophet. We speak of America as the chosen nation, and of our government as unexcelled, forgetting that no nation or people have been strong enough to defy the laws of God. May it not be well for us to ask if the growing evils of Sabbath-breaking, swearing, drunkenness, dishonesty and impurity are not signs of decay?

Soul, Take Thine Ease. Israel knew from bitter experience the weight of God's punishment for wrong-doing. They might not hope to escape but they would "put far away the evil day." There is always a day of reckoning. Every natural law has a penalty attached, and the laws of the spiritual world are strong. Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The young man who sows his wild oats, reaps a crop of tares that not only chokes out all hopes of worldly success, but destroys the soul.

In the Lap of Luxury. The shepherd of Tekoa has the clear vision of the desert; he sees in the elegance and luxury of the rich only plunder drawn from the poor, who are robbed even of their shoes and the single upper garment in which they sleep. He is filled with contempt for the courtiers that lie on ivory divans and sprawl on their couches in imitation of the worshipers at heathen feasts. The fine ladies of Samaria drinking wine remind him of stolid kine. The prophet knows that instead of their delicate meats they will some day eat shin bones. Would the prophet be more favorably impressed with the luxury of today? Would our society dudes command his respect, or the society ladies in their silly finery appear more fair to him? Would he not see the same lack of true religion, the same grinding of the poor, the same shocking impurity, and as much drunkenness?

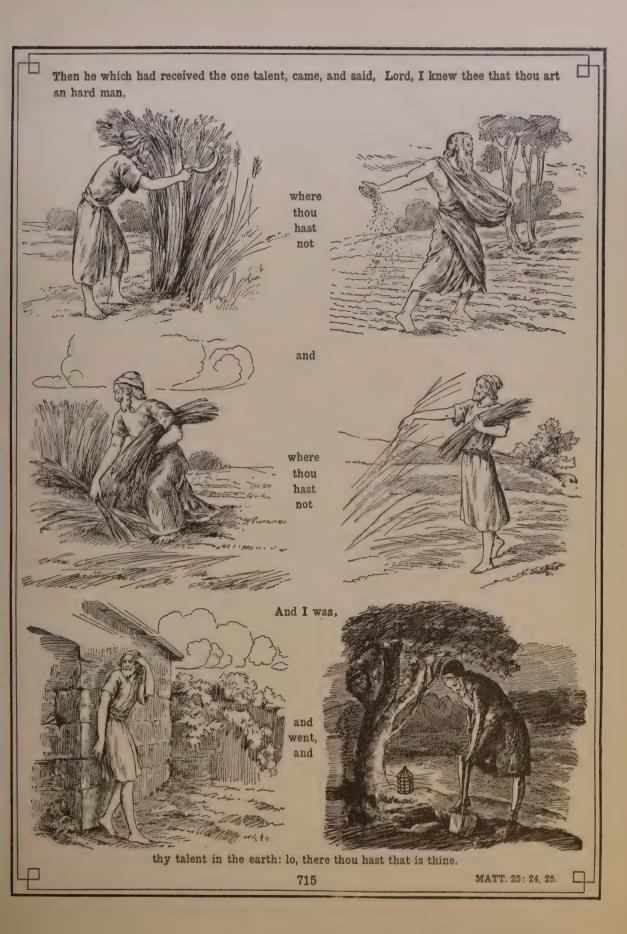
Wine in Bowls. Guests at the feasts drank until the most repulsive excesses prevailed. Even the women drank to intoxication. The term "Drunkards of Ephraim" was used to describe the worst drunkards. Yet they were a people proud of their culture. Strong drink is no respecter of persons; the rich and the poor, the cultured and the ignorant alike, become its victims and sink into folly and bestiality.

How Sin Spoils. A painter once painted a picture of innocence, with a beautiful young lad as his model. Years after he wished to paint a most repulsive evil face, and after much search found a man whose sin-scarred countenance filled his reed. One day the model glanced at the painted "Innocence" and burst into tears. "I sat to you for that picture, sir," he said, "but drink has made me what I am."

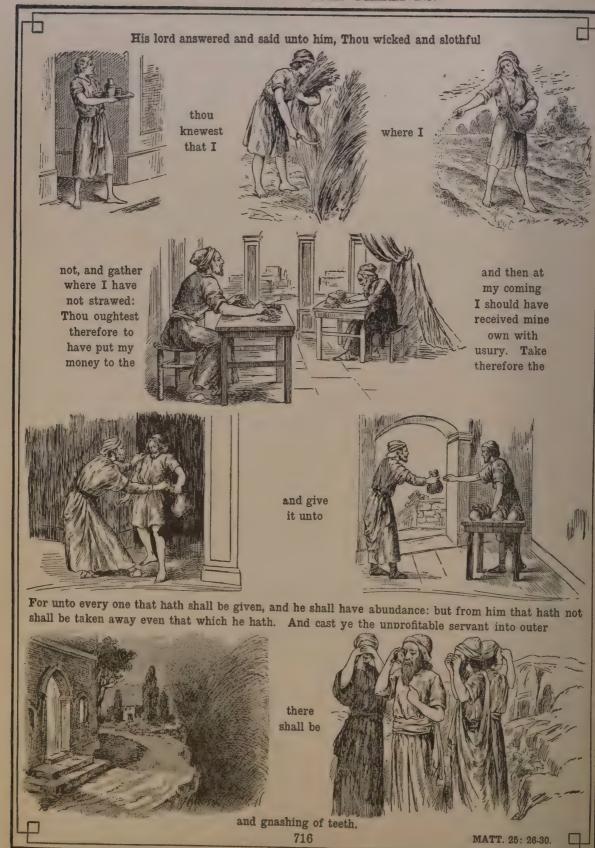
The Prophet's Warning. The shepherd in peasant garb publishes God's judgment upon this wicked and luxurious people. God's favor does not rest upon these palaces. Their wealth will collapse as suddenly as it came. The city and its inhabitants will be taken captives. Terrible and awful is the retribution which Amos pictures, for pestilence shall follow war. The prophet spoke about 755 B. C.; in 724 there was a siege and blockade of the whole land, which lasted three years. The houses were overthrown, the rich men and delicately nurtured women were taken captive. Retribution is swift and sure. We must remember, too, that drunkenness in the Bible times was confined largely to the rich; that poisonous distilled liquors were unknown. If the drunkenness of the few caused the downfall of a prosperous nation, what will be the result of the intemperance among rich and poor, and where the sin of strong drink is almost universal?

Seed Thou hts. 1. The form of religion without the spirit is unavailing. 2. It is not the name we bear, but the One we serve that proclaims the Christian. 3. When the evil day is postponed the reckoning is always greater. 4. The Christian life has no place for self-indulgence. 5. Wealth has wings. 6. "Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three—himself, his hungering neighbor and Me."

MARGARET WINTRINGER.



PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS MATT. 25:14-30. READ ALSO LUKE 19:12-26. "Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

Prayer: Lord, Help us to use Thine every gift for Thy glory; to labor for the Master's cause and in all things be found faithful. For Christ's sake, Amen. Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 33. Place, Mount Olivet, near Jerusalem. Persons, Jesus and His disciples. Characters, a rich land owner and his three servants.

Scripture Setting: The Use of Time. Learning to use time, Psa. 90:12. Diligence commanded, Eccles. 11:6. Work while it is day, John 9:4. Uncertainty of time, John 12:35. Time well spent, Rom. 13:11-13. Perseverance and well doing rewarded, Gal. 6:9.

Life and Conduct Setting: In this parable Christ teaches. 1. That God has given every man talents to be used in His service. 2. The justice of God, who exacts service according to ability. 3. Diligence is always rewarded. 4. Faithfulness brings fellowship with God. 5. There is no excuse for slothfulness or unfaithfulness. 6. That reward comes to the evil as well as to the good.

AN INVESTMENT AND ITS RETURNS.

The Passover was at Memorable Days. hand; the days were fraught with significance; the very air pregnant with forebod-The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple had been foretold. As Christ left the temple for the last time, the bewildered disciples climbed Mount Olivet with Him and grouped themselves about Him. How many times afterward the scene must have recurred to them! The Master, as He sat enthroned on the everlasting rocks and in the presence of one of the most beautiful prospects the earth affords, spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. And it was nearer than they knew. Calvary, the cross and the tomb were at hand. With illustration and parable Jesus sought to fortify His disciples against the time when He should be no longer with them.

The Investment. "For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods." God gives no quit-claim deeds. Talents, riches, honors, intellect, ability all belong to Him. We simply hold these things in trust for Him. The world is beginning to recognize the great fact of stewardship.

Good Stewards. A multimillionaire who is now engaged in the distribution of his vast fortune by means of large gifts to many objects recently declared, "The world makes a mistake when it calls me a generous man. I know full well all this money is not mine; I did not bring any of it into the world with me; I cannot take it out of the world with me; I can only handle it while I am in the world." "My life is a vow," was the declaration of Frances E. Willard, who laid every gift upon the altar of humanity. God has invested heavily in us. Are we bringing in returns on the investment?

According to Ability. "Unto one he gave five talents; to another, two, and to another, one; to every man according to his ability." The Master knew His men. Are you dissatisfied with the gifts bestowed on you? in soldier, but none invested their talents with such result to their country. There have been greater women writers than Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but the one used her talents for

Just as the master mechanic knows to the very grain how much weight each iron beam that goes from the foundry can support, so God knows us. He reads the hearts of men and weighs their action. How we should guard our thoughts that they may be pure in His sight, for He tells us, I know the things that come into your mind, every one God knows how much ability. of them. power and prosperity each of His servants can use to advantage. Wealth and power are dangerous instruments unless God-given. It is said that a certain philanthropist always prayed that he and his family might be forever delivered from the temptation of riches; each generation of that family has contributed to the list of the world's benefactors, but none have sought wealth or posi-

The Five Talent Men. There are few five talent men and women in the world. When we find them they disclaim any favoritism of fortune. Edison, the wizard of electricity, has defined genius as nine parts industry and application and one part brains. Helen Gould using her wealth to benefit humanity. Mrs. Lucy Webb Hayes throwing her influence as mistress of the White House on the side of total abstinence. Frances Havergal consecrating every talent of voice, mind, heart and hand to Christ, are instances of the investment of five talents yielding one hundredfold increase.

Neither Poverty Nor Riches. The world has need of two-talent people; persons of superior attainment who are not trying to emulate genius. The world's greatest work has been done by such men and women. Patrick Henry excelled Washington as an orator; Madison was a better scholar; Franklin more of a philosopher; Morris a greater financier and Arnold a more dashing soldier, but none invested their talents with such result to their country. There have been greater women writers than Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but the one used her talents for

the slave, the other in behalf of childhood and both invested wisely.

The Better Choice. Friends expostulated and music lovers raved when a gifted young singer decided to lend her talents of youth and beauty to the pauper inmates of a great city almshouse. She went from ward to ward and under the sway of her magic voice, sickness, poverty, loneliness, failure and sorrow were forgotten on that Christmas Eve. She had traded her two talents and given happiness to hundreds of the world's neglected ones. Ere the next Christmas the sweet singer had entered the joy of her Lord and joined the Choir Invisible. How rich the reward! "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these."

Only One Talent. Abraham Lincoln, the great commoner, used to say, "God must love the common people or he would not have made so many of them." The world is filled with one talent people; they are the ones who do the world's work. By them the world is housed, fed and clothed. Let no one despise the one talent.

"Who doeth one thynge welle, He hathe fulfylled the Gospel,"

sings an old poet.

Sightless, unhearing and voiceless, in a world without light or sound, the sense of touch her only point of contact with the world about her, Helen Keller has traded with the one talent, conquered every disadvantage and developed the highest womanhood.

Opportunity Misused. Only one talent, and it misused! In the parable of the pounds, one servant who received the one pound, wrapped it in a napkin and laid it away. That were bad enough, but the man who received one talent, buried it in the earth. Alas for the talent buried in the earth, not planted to bear fruit, but hidden in the muck of impurity and sunken in the mire of drunkenness. Defense and apology were so thin and false as to be futile. How many seek to excuse their own evil conduct by aspersing others just as this servant excuses his unfaithfulness by charging harshness upon his master. The husband who spent his time at the saloon pleads that his home is unhappy and his wife is ill-tem-

Commendation and Condemnation. Let us note that the Master makes no distinction in His commendation of the faithful servants. He gave one five talents, the other two, but both receive the same praise and

the same reward. It was sufficient that the one who received the two talents invested as wisely as he who had five talents. Scant endowment and limited opportunity are not an excuse either for neglect or misuse of whatever talent may be ours. Had he used the one talent to the same advantage, the man with the one talent would have been just as highly commended as he who returned ten talents and the reward would have been the same. It was not because he had a little, but because he came to his Lord with a misused talent, a miserable excuse and a lie. An eminent brain specialist tells us that the average man only uses onetenth of the brain power with which he is endowed. Have you developed your brain to its utmost capacity, or has it been misused and befogged with tobacco smoke or dulled by alcohol?

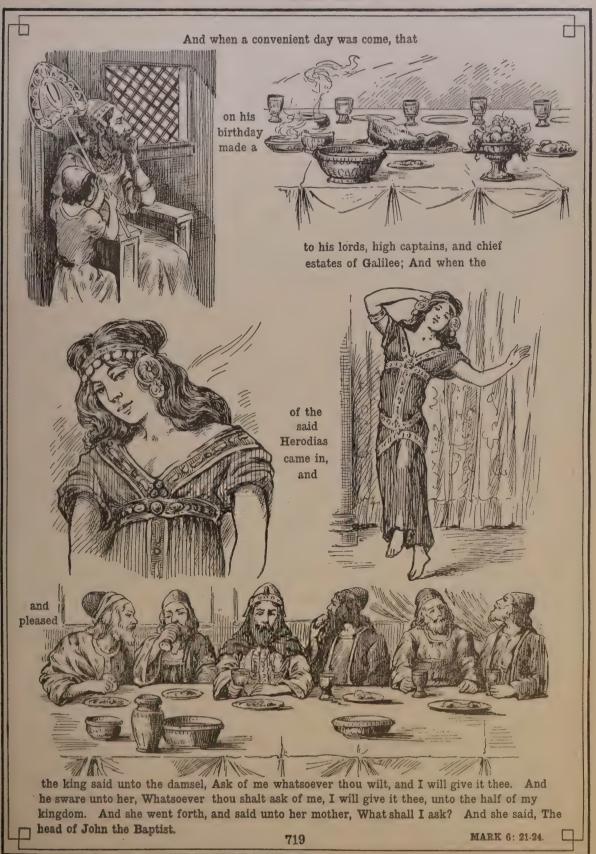
The Power of Example. A lady was one time at a Thanksgiving dinner, where wine sauce was served with dessert. All the other guests partook of the sauce. Should she be peculiar, perhaps offend her hostess by refusing? It was such a little thing, it hardly seemed worth while to distinguish herself from the others, but across the table a young man sat and watched her, and the dessert was untouched. Many months afterward a young man came to Sunday school and became a member of the class this lady taught. Later he professed faith in Christ. On the day he joined the church he asked his Sunday school teacher if she remembered leaving the wine sauce untouched at the Thanksgiving dinner. "I sat opposite you," he said. "I had come to this city for a chance to reform, for in the town I had formerly worked I had fallen into drinking through bad companions. That wine sauce roused all the old appetite and I would have fallen but for your example. I found out where you lived and joined your Sunday school class because I believed in you, and through your influence I have been led to Christ." It was a small opportunity to use one's talent, but it yielded an hundredfold.

one's talent, but it yielded an hundredfold.

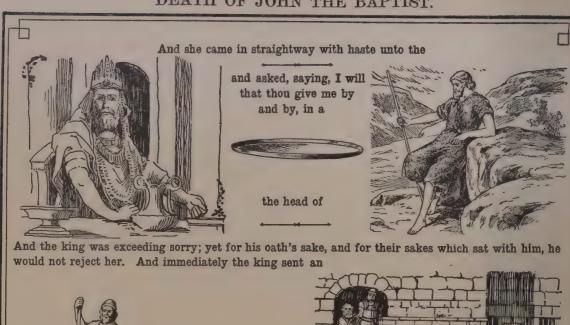
Quiz. 1. What other parable did Christ use similar to the parable of the talents? 2. How do the two parables differ? 3. Give two instances of persons who have accomplished much under adverse conditions. 4. Is any one wholly without some talent which may be invested in the Master's service?

Seed Truths. 1. It was not the man of five talents, but the man with one talent whom his master condemned. Had it been the man of five talents all the one talent people in the world would have had an excuse for failure to invest the one talent. 2. God does not ask the impossible; He did not ask ten talents of a one talent man. 3. The man who thinks the world his enemy is usually an enemy to the world. 4. The pot does not whiten itself by calling the kettle black.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.



DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.





and commanded his head to be brought: and he went, and beheaded him in the



And brought his



and



and the damsel



MARK 6: 25-28.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS MARK 6: 16-28. READ ALSO MATT. 14:1-11.

Prayer: Lord, May I dedicate my youth to Thee, and all through life be submissive to Thy will, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 32. Flace, Jerusalem. Fersons, John the Baptist, Herod, his wife Herodias, and Salome, daughter of Herodias.

Herodias, and Salome, daughter of Herodias.
Scripture Setting: A Woman's Influence for Good or Ill. The first temptress, Gen. 3:12. A scheming mother, Gen. 27:6-13. A traitress, Judges 19:4-5. A wife's wicked influence, I Kings 21:25. A suppliant for her people, Esther 7:3-4. Commended by Christ, Luke 10:42; 21:1-4. A wife's warning, Matt. 27:19. A mother and grandmoth er's influence, II Timothy 1:5.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of this story are: 1. The vacillating character of Herod. 2. John's fearlessness in denouncing sin in high places. 3. The power of a wicked woman's influence. 4. Sensual pleasures lead to crime. 5. The indifference and callousness of the dancer. 6. Herod's false sense of honor which led him to do a most deadly wrong to a good man rather than acknowledge himself wrong to evil companions. 7. That the guilty conscience of Herod breeds superstition.

"My conscience had a thousand several tongues,

-Shakespeare.

And every tongue brings in a several tale

And every tale condemns me for a villain.'

THE TRAGEDY OF AN EVIL WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

A Heroic Character. To have one's portrait and "write-up" appear in a popular periodical; to be eulogized by president or king; to be the recipient of praise from a great legislative body; all these are considered honors worth striving for. But none of the world's great men ever had their rank assigned by such an authoritative source as the hero of our lesson. "Among those born of woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Thus Christ himself assigned the place which the preacher of the wilderness was to occupy among the Immortals. Christ's eulogy of John the Baptist was not given while the desert was peopled with throngs that hung upon his eloquence and the preacher was in the height of his popularity, but when deserted by all but a few followers, John languished in prison. It affords us an opportunity to study the Christ ideal of true greatness.

Preacher and King Meet. Wherever and however they met, we can readily imagine the meeting. They who wore the soft clothing of the king's house had not gone out to see a "man clothed in soft raiment," for the preacher was of the wilderness, clad in the coarsest garb and living on the poorest fare. He has a message for Herod, which he delivers unflinchingly and without apology, for Christ himself tells us John was not a "reed shaken by the wind," not a vacillating, man-pleasing time-servant. "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." In these few words the prophet rebuked Herod's sin. Crime in high places is too often condoned. John the Baptist would not have the great criminals escape through the many loop-holes in the law, leaving only the petty violator enfolded in its meshes.

An Evil Woman. Though weak of will, Herod was a man of good impulses, as is shown by the admiration and regard which mingled with his fear of the stern and fear-

less prophet; but Herodias was of a different type altogether. It is not necessary to dwell upon the disgraceful story of her life, the brief allusions to her in the accounts of John the Baptist's death reveal the woman in all her wickedness, plotting and scheming

the death of the prophet. An Unstable Man. Herod's better nature led him to frequently summon John from prison that he might learn more of the repentance unto righteousness which John preached. A dark crime was on his own conscience and many times his soul must have cried out for the remission of sins which John offered. Indeed, if the prophet had temporized Herod's sin, or even kept silence concerning it, he might have had a kingly convert and regained his liberty as well. But not in the darkest hour of the dungeon, not even in the times of doubt which made him send to Christ to know if his own testimony concerning Him was true. did John the Baptist ever offer to compromise with wrong. He might doubt his own calling, he might not know the Christ whose coming he himself had foretold, but he knew right from wrong, and never swerved from the right. No wonder that he exerted a fascination over the unstable Herod who one moment would have killed him but for the fear of the people and then would have released him but for fear of Herodias! What a wonderful opportunity was Herod's! It was in his power to prepare the way of the Lord, had he listened to the prophet; the Gospel of Christ might have been preached in his court and have spread throughout his realm. Instead of being execrated, his name might have been forever blessed. There are wrongs to be righted, great reforms to be inaugurated in the world today, but those who are wavering and unstable, swayed by the multitude, fearing the forces of evil, will

A Birthday Feast. "Herod, on his birthday, made a supper to his lords, high captains and chief estates of Galilee." It was such a feast as might have been expected in a court of such sensual luxury and wicked self-indulgence. There was levity, wine and dancing. Not one of the gay pleasure seekers had the faintest intimation of the dark tragedy that loomed so near. In how many dance halls are revellers as careless and absorbed in the merrymaking until, under the flush of sinful excitement and sensual desire, tragedy comes and death enters. How foul a record of murders conceived in the excitement of wine and lust; the tragic and untimely ending of such mad revelry comes alike to the low concert hall and the courts of fashion. What a relief to think of that other feast pictured in the same chapter, which contains our lesson. At the one a king presides; here Christ is the central figure and His blessing makes the homely place and homely fare, a few barley loaves and two small fishes, abundant for the multitude, while His presence brings peace and surcease from sorrow, labor and care. The two feasts are typical of the pleasures which the world has to offer and of the abundance which Christ gives.

The Temptress. "The daughter of the said Herodias came in and danced and pleased Herod and them that sat with him." can measure a young girl's influence? Salome danced and won the gross admiration of her audience. Often with immodest attire, the flush of wine and sensuous dance, the belles of the ball-room exact the same tribute, and fancy they have won real admiration. Alas, that some still use their youth and beauty to tempt rather than to uplift. A young girl "just loves the smell of tobacco," giggles over an insinuating jest, challenges admiration in ways that lower her womanliness, proffers the wine and passes the cards, little dreaming of the disastrous effect of her influence.

A Rash Vow. The king said unto the damsel, "Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt and I will give it thee," and Herod even confirmed his offer with an oath. What will Salome ask? Once before a radiantly beautiful young woman appeared before a king and received the same royal favor. Esther asked for the salvation of her people, and saved a race from destruction. Will the young woman dancer use her influence in behalf of mercy? Ah there is a difference between the two. Through three days and nights of fasting and prayer Esther had prepared herself for the royal audience, while Salome sought to please the king with the latest dancing step. She has no vital interest, no engrossing mission, no real object to attain; she has not brains enough to proffer a request.

An Unnatural Mother. "And she went forth and said unto her mother, What shall I aski and she said The head of John the Baptist." Unfortunate daughter of an unnatural mother! Herodias' daughter is not the only girl who owes her downfall to the mother. Children quickly learn lessons of deception from a mother's false and unmeaning society gossip; become adepts in untruth through the ridiculously false threats used to enjoin obedience in early childhood; are trained in cruelty and even crime. "Mothers are wingless guardian angels," says an old proverb. The girl who finds in her mother a wise and true counsellor and is guided by that counsel is safeguarded from all evil.

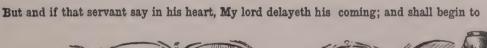
A Cowardly Crime. Not with reluctant step, but with hastening feet the girl returns and proffers her hideous request to the king. The girl has out-Heroded Herod, for the king "was exceedingly sorry." "Yet for his oath's sake and for their sakes which sat with him," Herod yields to this outrageous demand. It is a false sense of honor which leads a person to persist in an evil course through fear of ridicule of others more evil than themselves. Just as some men call gaming debts, debts of honor, and rob their employers and falsify their accounts in order to meet them; while others pay their saloon bills and let their children stauve. There was nothing about Herod to betoken the dangerous criminal, save his weakness and double mindedness. Yet through cowardice he became a murderer. The young man who starts out in life without any fixed principles becomes the victim of every temptation which assails him.

Mother and Daughter. The king gives his order to the executioner, John the Baptist is beheaded, and with her bloody trophy the pretty damsel trips off to her mother. Mother and daughter are of the same mold and the pair do not form an attractive picture. Rather would we look back thirteen centuries and see the spiritual bond which knit two women into closer relationship than the mere tie of blood, and hear sweet Ruth say to the older woman, "Vhither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." And these two became mother and daughter in the highest sense of the term. Relationship may be but a brute bond unless sanctified by Christ.

Retribution. The martyr's death only brought John abundant life, Lut Herod must pay the penalty. Despite his fascination for the prophet, he wanted to be rid of him, but when a greater than John the Baptist appears and is working miracles, swift dread comes upon the conscience-smitten, craven king. "It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead." With the death of John the Baptist, Herod's career began to wane. Defeat and banishment came each in their turn, with a lonely death as a political exile. But Herod had exiled himself from God and from the Kingdom of Heaven so near at hand, of which John the Baptist preached.

Seed Truths: 1. True greatness consists not in measure, but in the spirit. Christ pronounced the woman who gave her two mites the greatest philanthropist and the prophet who declared his own decrease and the rise of another the greatest man. 2. Messages that come straight from God are not always phrased to please the ear. 3. The vices of the fashionable set are too often imitated rather than rebuked. 4. Youth and beauty are talents for which God will require an account.

WATCHFULNESS.







and to



and
to be
drunken;
The
lord
of that
servant
will
come
in a



when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and

prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be



with few stripes.

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS LUKE 12:37-48. READ ALSO MATT. 24:42-51.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, May I be found faithful at thy coming. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

"Sooner or later, ah, sooner or later, Heaven will show us the false and the true. Sooner or later, ah, sooner or later, God will reward us for all that we do."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 33. Place, Mt. of Olives. Persons, Christ and His disciples.
Scripture Setting: The Necessity for Watchfulness. "Watchman, what of the night?" Isa. 21:11-12. A warning for others, Ezek. 3:17. Watching for God's message, Hab. 2:1. Watchfulness commended, Matt. 25:13. A safeguard against temptation, 1 Cor. 10:12. A Christian duty, Eph. 6:18. A condition of safety, 1 Peter 5:8. As a

means of growth, Rev. 3:2. Awaiting the coming of Christ, Rev. 16:15.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features of the parable are: 1. That Christ commends watchfulness on the part of His servants. 2. The importance of being in readiness for His coming. 3. The inclusiveness of Christ's gospel. 4. The contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful servant. 5. The justice of God's judgment and punishment.

EXPECTING A HEAVENLY VISITOR.

A Timely Lesson. Christ has been preaching to his disciples that they should avoid hypocrisy and timidity, covetousness and worldly care, and as He speaks to them of the importance of seeking first the Kingdom of God, He thinks of the time when He shall no longer be with His little chosen circle. He knows of what material each is made: sees the boastfulness of one, the impetuous temper of another, the doubt and pessimism of a third, the ambition of others and is even aware of the covetousness in the heart of that one who shall betray Him. The twelve whom he has chosen are just common men; persecution and suffering have not yet graven strength into their characters. they be faithful in the absence of their Lord? When He returns to His own will they be found in readiness for His coming?

When He Cometh. "Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." The lord himself shall minister to their needs and give them refreshment. "And if he comes in the second watch or the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants." Whatever the hour, whatever the crisis, those who are found at the post of duty have their reward. The Christ who so readily reads their thoughts sees that the disciples fail to catch the significance of the lesson. With a startling directness He declares "Be ye, therefore, ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

A Momentous Question and Its Answer. Now the disciples catch a measure of its meaning, and though they can comprehend only a small part of the great truth embodied in the lesson, what they do absorb is of such enormous import that they wonder if they are to appropriate it all to themselves. Impetuous Peter throws the question straight at the Master, "Lord, speaketh thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" Is Christ

speaking to the little group about him or to the great world? Ah, you and I have an interest in that question and its answer. Through all the ages and centuries since, the Lord's reply has incited every child of His to purer, holier living and a more faithful performance of duty. There is not a life so humble that, be it well lived, not a duty so menial or commonplace, that be it well done, but it shall be honored by the Master. "Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

The Reward. "Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." The world of today is troubled with a great spirit of unrest and discontent. People are longing for greater opportunity, for enlarged fields of usefulness, for more wealth and honors. Reliability is a magic talisman that works marvels for its possessor. Said an employer of many men recently, "I have ceased to ask concerning a boy's ability, experience or fitness. 'Can he be trusted' is all I want to know, for I can make a man out of any boy who meets that requirement." The faithful servant of the Lord shall reign with Christ.

In His Heart. "But and if that servant say in his heart." Solomon, the wise man, dwelt upon the importance of having a perfect heart. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Sir Galahad's strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure. The heart may be called the citadel of character; if it is once surrendered to evil then the enemy has possession of the entire man. Even temptations assume a different aspect. The way in which each meets a fall shows a marked distinction between the lamb and the hog. When a lamb stumbles and falls into the mire, it cries out for help and is not happy until it has shaken from its fleece every trace of defilement, while the hog will

roll in and enjoy the wallow into which it has fallen.

Eye Service. "My lord delayeth his coming." Mother is out of sight and will never know of the cigaret that is so boastfully smoked; a momentary absence has called the teacher from the school room. so the scholars may play—at any rate she will not discover that the book so intently read is a sensational novel instead of the lesson book; the employer's back is turned, so the employe may pilfer from the till, or the head of the firm is abroad, and the trusted bookkeeper juggles his accounts. The customer does not know of the false weight; the product will taste as good and the consumer will not know of its adulteration. The public is easily fooled and therefore the public official need not render honest service to his constituency.

Man's Inhumanity to Man. The steward, himself a servant, begins to beat his fellow servants who are under him. It has been said that the real test of character is the treatment accorded a subordi-nate. The boy who mistreats and domineers over his smaller companions grows into the big bully. The employer who works those under him as though they were mere human machines to be replaced by others when worn out, fails to get as good results in the end as where there is allowance and provision made for the wear and tear and strain upon

human nerve and muscle.

The Golden Bule Working. A great factory whose output is sent to the uttermost parts of the earth has engraved over its main entrance, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.'' There are dining rooms for young women employes, baths for all, a circulating library, free medical attendance and every need of the enlightened workman receives consideration, while each employe has a share in the profits. The profits have increased several hundredfold since the business has been brought into conformity with the Golden Rule of Christ.

"We shall be happy In our work and play. If the law of kindness we obey."

An Evil Course. It is not surprising that the untrustworthy servant was also a drunken servant. The most harmful action of alcohol on the mind is its tendency to affect the moral principles. The fine fiber of character undergoes degeneration. The confirmed drinker loses all sense of truth, and broken promises strew his pathway. Right and wrong are not distinguished, and good influences lose their power to move the drinker to worthy action. We read in the daily papers of men of previous good character who have become bank defaulters, forgers, swindlers and even more odious criminals, and investigate the cause only to find that they are open or secret drinkers. When the effects of alcohol on the highest functions of the brain are thoroughly known it is easily understood why prohibition reduces crime and empties jails and prisons.

Cigarets and Culprits. The late John V. Farwell, founder of the great firm of Farwell & Co.,

used to say that though he employed 5,000 men and boys, there was not a cigaret smoker among them. He declared he would as leave employ a man who stole sheep as a boy who used cigarets, for he said that wherever a case of dishonesty had been discovered the culprit had invariably been a cigaret smoker.

The Day of Reckoning. "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware." There is always a day of reckoning and it may not be put off. The boy may keep the knowledge of the cigaret from his mother, but through an enfeebled constitution, a weakened heart and possibly a commitment to an asylum, the secret sin will be published to the world. Lowered scholarship and a flunk at the final "exams" will proclaim the student's wasted hours and misused opportunity. The cash in the till must be accounted for, and the petty pilferer is discovered; some day an expert accountant appears and the bookkeeper's guilt is known.

Sometimes the culprits are like the native servant of a British government official, who was sent by his master to a missionary with a note accompanied by a gift of money and fruit. The native stole the rupees and ate the fruit, but ignorant of the writing, delivered the note, thus exposing

his own sin.

God, the Just Judge. The lesson has a deeper significance, whether or not exposure or earthly punishment come. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ve have seen Him go into Heaven." and when He comes He will bring His rewards with Him. "Unto whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him men shall ask the more." Sins of ignorance cannot be made immune from penalty, but wilful sin will receive the deepest condemnation and greatest punishment.

Quiz. 1. Whom does the Lord in this parable typify? 2. Who is meant by the Son of man? 3. What Old Testament prophets commended watchfulness? 4. What provision was made for sins committed through ignorance in the Mosaic law? 5. What does this lesson teach concerning

the justice of God?

Seed Truths. 1. He who watches is never surprised. 2. Faithfulness is the golden key which unlocks the door of opportunity. 3. Truthworthiness masters every combination of difficulties and hindrance. 4. No action in life is too small or insignificant to be recorded in the debit or credit column of Heaven's life record. 5. Eye service and lip service are often paid in counterfeit coin.
6. Unkindness to others brutalizes the one guilty of offense. 7. Drink is one of the chief causes of poor service. 8. God has a Divine sense of proportion.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

CHRIST FREEING FROM SIN.



Then said

to those
Jews
which
believed
on him,
If ye
continue
in my
word,
then are
ye my



indeed:
And ye
shall
know
the



and the truth shall make you



They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in



to any man:
how sayest
thou, Ye shall
be made free?
Jesus answered
them, Verily,
verily, I say
unto you,
Whosoever
committeth
sin is the



And the servant abideth not in the



for ever:
but the
Son
abideth
ever. If
the Son
therefore
shall



ye shall be free indeed.

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JOHN 8: 31-36.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS JOHN 8:31-36.

Prayer: Lord, Have mercy on me; free me from sin and make me Thine own child. For Thy name's sake. Amen.

"He opens wide the prison doors, And breaks the chains that bind us And bids us onward press and leave The world and sin behind us."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 32. Place, The temple, Jerusalem. Person, Christ.
Scripture Setting: Christ the Emancipator. Introduced by John the Baptist, John 1:29. Redemption through His blood, Eph. 1:7. Frees from sin and death, Rom. 8:2. Liberty through Christ, Isa. 61:1, Luke 4:18. Giver of eternal life, Rom.

Life and Conduct Setting: In the lesson Christ

teaches: 1. That the supreme test of service is continuance in well doing. 2. Truth frees from superstition and error. 3. Conduct and profession must harmonize. 4. The bondage of sin. 5. The wide difference between the slavery of sin and the liberty of the true child of God. 6. The and the liberty of the true child of God. 6. The only true efficient cure for sin. 7. The Christian is the true free man.

THE FREEMAN AND THE SLAVE.

A Portentous Proclamation. Napoleon proclaimed his right to the title of Emperor with much spectactular display. Magnificent pomp and the glittering blaze of pseudo royalty attended the coronation when with his own impatient hands he crowned himself. But here is One who announces His own pre-eminence over the whole world and Heaven itself. The very simplicity which attends the declaration makes the scene more extraordinary. Not a single blazing rocket; not a voice crying "Vive le roi"; no thundering of cannon or pealing of cathedral chimes; no jewel crowned aspirant for royalty, or claimant to a throne presents himself to the public, but a man of humble, modest and even sorrowful mein stands in the treasury of the temple and declares to a few hearers, "I am the Light of the world.

His Followers. "As he spoke these words many believed on Him." We fancy then was enacted one of the popular outbursts of enthusiasm which the writers of the Gospels sometimes record. Palms may have been strewn across His pathway, some perhaps threw their own garments before Him to carpet His way, and "Hosanna to the Son of David" may have come from many throats. In moments of public excitement and when the very air is rife with faith, doubts pass away. It is easy to follow the multitude either for good or evil.

The Real Test. There must have been some public demonstration of faith in Him, for "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." That was to be the test of their profession of Christ. This world is a great testing place

and every day a testing time.

The Test Applied. The machinist stands in the shed awaiting the incoming train and before the cars have been emptied of their passengers, he is at the wheels tapping each with his hammer, and his experienced ear I The statement is so logical, so irrefutable

knows if they ring true. Farming is no longer haphazard and indiscriminate sowing of untried seed. Corn, oats and barley, wheat and rye are first tested to know what returns they may yield. Jesus looks at His new followers whose hosannas may be ringing still in His ears, and puts the test of continuance in well doing, which is the test of a Christian today. A theological student once asked an ignorant young colored girl if she had ever "experienced entire regeneration." "No sah, but I'se had spasms," was the reply. The true follower of Christ is not a spasmodic Christian.

The Office of Truth. "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." "What is truth?" was the problem propounded by one of the world's greatest philosophers. For centuries the world had been seeking after truth when Christ came with the immortal declaration, "I am the Truth." No need to cower in doubt or cringe before falsehood and sophistry." "As Christ would do" frees from every perplexing doubt in regard to conduct. Could one imagine the Holy One walking the streets of Jerusalem with pipe or cigar between his teeth, or would a cheap politician dare to buttonhole him with argument concerning financial gain to accrue from governmental complicity with sin? The bare suggestion is a startling sacrilege to those who know Christ. A knowledge of truth regarding alcohol and tobacco is freeing the world from its slavery to a terrible and degrading sin. It is hard to convince a sinner of his need of a Saviour. The drunkard is always the last one to realize his own repulsive degradation. The opium fiend fancies he is hiding his vice from all eyes, when by every sign of nature, his secret is known to all.

Who is Master? In the very face of their scorn, Jesus hurls the declaration, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

that it needs no elaboration. No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Not only because God is a jealous God but because of natural law; two objects can not occupy the same given space at the same time. "Either he will hate the one and hold to the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." If one's time is devoted to sinful pleasure, if the voice is uplifted in blasphemy, and the example is on the side of evil habit and custom, if the influence and the vote help to perpetuate the wrong, not all the prayers and tithes and offerings can free from the Mastership of Satan.

The late Sam Jones used to aptly say, "When you see a measly yaller cur following at the heels of two men, you never can tell who owns him till the men separate at a corner. Then you know who he belongs to, for he will follow his master." Temptations are the crises and corners of life—turning points which proclaim who is Master.

Servant or Son. Again and again Christ emphasizes the security of the righteous and the insecurity of the sinner. Now he uses the figure of servant and son, "The servant abideth not in the house forever." Through a false sense of security Satan lulls the conscience and judgment of the sinner. moderate drinker is perfectly sure he will know enough to stop before he gets too much and is not warned by the example of those who have gone over the precipice of drink before him. One cannot forever go in sin without meeting the consequences. drunkard and drink-seller must meet the "Without are drunkards and murderers," and the "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink."

"But the son abideth ever." Christs' reign shall not only be unending but shall increase until every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess His name, and the one who is a son of God through Him is not moved by every temptation nor shaken by every trial of faith. He is stable in all his ways, and established in all his goings; he has a mansion eternal in Heaven. How foolish he who becomes a servant by choice when he may have the privilege of sonship!

The Great Emancipator. With a few strokes of the pen, Abraham Lincoln struck the shackles from off 4,000,000 slaves and his name shall live in history as the emancipator of a race. By the shedding of His own blood as a sacrifice for our sins, Christ became the emancipator of the human race. It is popular at the present time to treat sin as a disease and the papers are filled with advertisements of much vaunted cures for drunkenness, all

of which may be well enough in their way, but if sin is a disease it is a disease of the soul which needs the Great Physician. Some years ago a poor wretched drunkard, recovering from a prolonged debauch, starving and miserable, found his way to the Chicago river and stood upon its banks ready for the final plunge. He had fought against the curse of an inherited appetite and had been worsted in the battle. Thrice he had been to the gold cure for drunkenness and pronounced cured, only to fall again. Sanitariums innumerable had studied his case and sent him out into the world again only to drink the more. Death seemed preferable to life, but before he could leap into the icy water, a policeman pulled him backward and took the rescued wreck to one of the city missions, where the Christ cure was applied, and freed from the slavery of appetite the man is sober today.

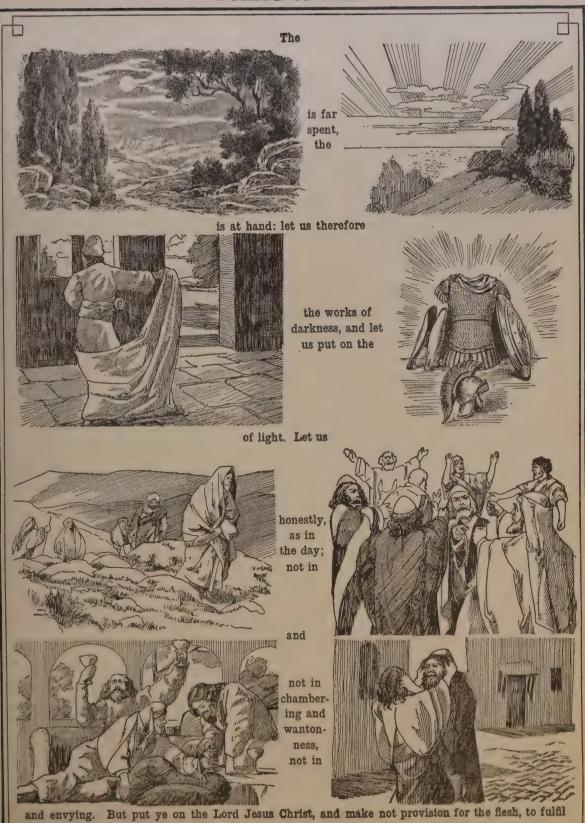
The Larger Liberty. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Prolonged and hard struggle may enable one to hold appetite in check and one may be able by rigorous self-control to gain many victories over one's besetting sin, but in an evil moment desire sweeps away the guards of a life time, sin enters and the last state is worse than the first. Too many pledges are broken because the first clause "Trusting in God to help me, I solemnly promise," has been a meaningless phrase. A trust in God is the drunkard's greatest safeguard. John B. Gough repented and reformed many times, only to fall again until led to accept Christ as a Saviour from his besetting sin. John G. Woolley tells us that for seven years after his reclamation he fought appetite often to the verge of defeat, until led to lay his case before Christ and to pray for perfect victory over sin. After a night spent in prayer, he walked up and down the streets of Chicago the next morning to find that for the first time in his life he could pass the city's ginshops without the slightest desire to drink. He was free indeed.

Quiz. 1. Whom is Christ addressing? 2. What disclosure of Himself has He made? 3. What character in Pilgrim's Progress was faithful unto death? 4. How were the Pharisees able to say, "Abraham is our father"? 5. How did John the Baptist rebuke their pride? 6. What is the greatest freedom?

Seed Thoughts. 1. It is easy to believe with the multitude, but hard to continue with the minority. 2. He who continueth to the end gains the final victory. 3. Truth makes no slaves and forges no shackles. 4. Ascent is better than descent from the oldest family tree. 5. That which bears the trade mark is the property of the one who holds the copyright. 6. Error must die, but truth shall live forever. 7. Christ is the giver of all liberty. 8. He is only free who wears the yoke of Christ.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

PURITY OF LIFE.



BOM, 13: 12-14.

the lusts thereof.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS ROMANS 13:11-14.

Prayer: Lord, May we so spend the days of our life that when the night cometh we shall be ready for Thine appearing. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

We build the ladder by which we rise From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies, And mount to its summit round by round.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 58. Place, written by Paul from Corinth and sent by Phoebe to the church at Rome.

Scripture Setting: A Clean Life. Commanded by God, Isa. 1:16-19; 2 Cor. 7:1. A requisite of Christian service, Isa. 52:11. Impossible without help, Psa. 19:12. God, the Creator of a clean heart, Psa. 51:10. Christ, the cleanser, Mark 1:40-41;

John 15:3. Cleansed through the blood, 1 John 1:7. Citizens of Heaven, Psa. 24:3-4.

Life and Conduct Setting: Paul would emphasize: 1. The call for Christian service. 2. The necessity for repentance. 3. The Christian life an armor of protection. 4. Heart and life purity. 5. Christ as the great example of a perfect life. 6. Sin should have no part in Christian reckoning.

THE NEW CITIZENSHIP.

A Letter and Its Carrier. That was a masterly letter which Phoebe carried from Corinth to Rome. The Government mails have borne many precious messages and important documents, but it is doubtful if fast mail service or Royal Mail packet ever carried a letter which meant so much as the one which Paul entrusted to a woman. Eighteen and a half centuries have passed, but the name of that early Christian woman has gained world-wide fame, has been printed in more than four hundred languages and has gone wherever the bible has been carried. Doubtless it would have seemed a trifling commission to any of the world's great ones of her day, but while their adventures and victories are forgotten, Phoebe's errand has become momentous. Let no one deny to woman a part in the spread of God's message to a sin-sick world.

"There are nights and nights," Night. as the old lady declared. At the close of each hard working day do we always remember to thank God for the kindly night with its rest, sleep and refreshment? Then there is the night of heavy sorrow, when a loved one has gone from the home; but even when the absence is for a season what a sense of loss and loneliness when the boy leaves the home roof. How dark the night to those who had seen Christ's departure: So eagerly they remembered His promise to return, so ardently they longed for His second coming, so unending the days without the Master, it seemed as though the hour must be at hand. Paul had been with these disciples and caught their expectation. He would have the Romans, as it behooves every Christian, to watch for that glorious day. All may not hope to see that last great day. There is a final night that comes to all, and the great Apostle would remind us that our little day is so short, that the Christian should be up and doing, lest the shades of that final night close on a life-long, illspent day.

The Coming Day. Christ's reappearance having been foretold in such a supernatural manner, there was danger that those who heard the angel's announcement should dream and dwell over-much on the glorious coming which they awaited, and live in that future rather than work for the present. With a broader and more logical vision, Paul saw that present opportunity. There were wrongs to be righted; burdens to be lifted that would hasten Christ's coming. "For now is our salvation nearer than we believed." No need to wait the millennium, we may hasten the Lord's coming to some heart now; no need to grieve that the way is blocked to the foreign mission field when a foreigner lives next door. There are temperance people who will not trouble to enforce a law because they are awaiting the glorious dawn of prohibition. Salvation from a legalized liquor traffic is nearer than we had dared believe.

A Call to Action. Who has not felt the temptation to sleep on through the morning hours? Paul's words are like the oft repeated morning call of father or mother: "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep." It is a call to do today's duties, to resist today's temptations; it is a call to repentance. "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness." How well Paul understood the encumbrance of sin. He had not watched the Olympian games for nothing. He knew that when men raced, swam or wrestled, they ought to have as little impedimenta as possible. Every muscle must have utmost play, there must be liberty of limb and motion. Therefore to the church at Jerusalem he pictures sin as a weight to be laid aside; to the Romans he describes sin as a garment. Secret sins and vices ruin health, sap the vital energy and destroy ambition. They are to be discarded as one would an infected robe.

An Armour of Light. What a fighter is Paul and how he glories in using the figures

of earthly warfare and changing their significance into a spiritual meaning. Four years before he had written to the Thessalonians and four years later he wrote to the Ephesians of the proper accoutrement of the Christian in the spiritual warfare. A girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, gospel sandals, a shield of faith and helmet of salvation shall Paul's soldier wear; it is a panoply of defense, for the Christian warfare is largely a battle against the assaults of temptation. It is also aggressive with the drawn sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

Honest Living. "Let us walk honestly as in the day." Live in the open, look men in the eye, walk erect! The man who lives in the broad daylight, his word as good as his bond; his character at par with his reputation; conduct tallying with profession; and a soul as straight as his straightforward gaze: this is the man whom Paul com-mends. The world stands in need of such citizens today.

The Enemies' Forces: Paul has given the call to arms, invested his Christian soldier with armor and now he points to the enemy with such directness that we seem to see Satan's phalanx: rioting and drunkenness. chambering and wantonness, strife and envying. The Christian should have no part in those revels of sinful folly which are inconsistent with clean living. Drunkenness has charged on many a citadel of character and leveled it to the ground. Wherever liquor is served is no place for the Christian. The secret sins of impurity or more open profligacy are alike destructive to character, while strife and envy are unbecoming the follower of the Prince of Peace.

A Glorious Panoply. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." On the eve of a desperate battle, Æneas' mother, anxious for her son's safety, brought down from Olympus an in vulnerable panoply and laid it at Æneas' feet. The son puts on the panoply and becomes invulnerable to all the thrusts of the enemy. The Heavenly Father, more careful for the safety of His children than any goddess-mother of heathendom, has committed to us a pattern of life so perfect that it saves from all unrighteousness all those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ. At our feet lies the robe of His righteousness. Do sinful pleasures entice? Put on the Lord Jesus Christ who pleased not Himself. Does an uncontrollable appetite for strong drink strive for mastery? Put on the Lord Jesus Christ who was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Does impurity spread like a contagion to tempt and de-

stroy? Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

The Enlistment Banner. "No compromise" is to be inscribed on the banner of the New Citizenship. When we license the sale of intoxicating liquors because there has always been drunkenness in the world and always will be, and it is better to regulate a vice vou cannot hope to eradicate, do we not make "provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof?" St. Augustine tells how this verse came to him, changing the entire current of his life. When walking in a garden at Milan, his attention was caught by a voice, perhaps the call of children at play, "Take and read, Take and read."

He opened again a copy of the Epistles he had but lain down and writes: "I read in silence the first place on which my eyes fell. 'Not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wan-tonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts! At the close of the sen-tence, as if a ray of certainty had poured into my heart, the clouds of hesitation fled at once." He had "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Knight of the New Chivalry. He stands six feet tall in moral dimensions, his feet solidly planted on the rock Truth; his shoulders squared against evil, with a chest girth broadened and deepened by aspiration and high endeavor, with eyes so pure that the mother will find her own soul reflected in their clear depths. His hands in readiness for the work that lies nearest and on his breast the stamp of the conquering Christ. There is a call for him from factory and workshop, from business and professional life, from the judge's bench and the capitol. He is a soldier without bayonet or rifle, fighting every entrenched wrong in the name of God and humanity. But a short time ago the world thought him a Don Quixote, fighting windmills: today they call him a Christian

Quiz. 1. What great event did the early Christians await? 2. Where does Paul describe the accoutrement of the Christian soldier? 3. Did Paul refer to military warfare or spiritual strug-gle? 4. To whom did he send this call? 5. When did Paul go to Rome and what happened to him there?

Seed Thoughts. 1. No errand is trifling in the sight of the Master. 2. Each life is one of the days in eternity's calendar. 3. Sin is a weight to the soul. 4. Purity of life means strength of purpose. 5. Compromise and conquest do not go together. 7. Christ is our robe of righteousness.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every



shall bow to me, and every



shall confess to God.
So then every
one of us shall give
account of himself

to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a



or an occasion to



in his brother's way. It is good neither to



nor to



nor any thing whereby thy brother



or is



or is made weak.

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ROM. 14: 11-13, 21.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS ROMANS 14: 11-21.

Prayer: Our Father, May we follow the example of Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, toward the weak and sinful. For His name's sake, Amen.

"Each man shall bear his neighbor's burden, Each care for all; Love's light shall shine in every cottage,

Love's words fill every hall."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, 58 A. D. Written by Paul from Corinth to the Christian church at Rome. Scripture Setting: Duty to Others. To share temporal benefits, Lev. 19:9-10. To relieve want, Lev. 25:35. To bear infirmities of the weak, Rom. 15:1. To bear another's burdens, Gal. 6:2. The duty of sympathy, Rom. 12:15. Exercise of patience, Thess. 5:14. To love, I John 4:7.

Life and Conduct Setting: Paul would have these early Christians: 1. Exercise charity toward the weaknesses of others. 2. Refrain from judging their brethren. 3. Sacrifice their own pleasure for the greater good. 4. Gain a higher conception of the kingdom of God. 5. Abstain from self-indulgence. 6. Consider the weakness of others.

THE MISSION OF THE STRONG.

The Greatest of These is Charity. While the earliest of the Roman Christians were Jews by birth, the Roman church contained also a large element who were of Gentile origin. It was not strange that the two elements should have a different view point. The Jewish contingent while accepting Christ, still clung not only to the Mosaic code, but to the rabbinical traditions concerning fast and feast and proscribed food, and sought to urge their views and ceremonials upon the others; while with little forbearance and small consideration for their scruples the Gentile portion of the church scoffed their narrowness and turned the criticism of themselves into ridicule. Paul has made it plain that these differences are immaterial, that the Jew has no reason to boast over his brother. In practices which are so non-essential each has a right to his own views; for to God only are they accountable.

The Final Account. Paul has given a terse but striking picture of that great day when "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." Of himself he must give an account and not of another.

Whose Stick Is Notched? An old legend tells of a man of harsh and unforgiving spirit who recorded every ill of his neighbors and every injury and wrong perpetrated by them by cutting a notch on a stick which he kept for that purpose. One day he appeared before Heaven's gate, the notched stick his only staff and support. "Good St. Peter, pray open to one who has lived so long among evil people that he longs to dwell forever with the good. The notches on this stick will tell you of the wrongs and injuries done by those I have left behind." To his surprise St. Peter broke the stick into a thousand pieces and began to flay him with another twice as long and twice as deeply indented, while he warned him to be gone, with the words, "By a man's own deeds is he beaten or blessed. The stick that is your scourge is notched by the wrongs and injuries you have done to others."

Judge Not. How tenderly persuasive is the admonition, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more." Paul has caught the spirit of the Master. Reformers may places? What of the innumerable evil

well study his example. He does not don ermine and mount the judicial bench to talk down to the sinner but enters the prisoner's dock and identifies himself with the culprit by the use of the personal pronoun "us." When we rebuke and when we judge another, let us, like Paul, remember ourselves as the chief of sinners. The "holier than thou" spirit should have no place in reform. Who art thou that thou judgest another? Why dost thou judge thy brother? The poor drunkard in the gutter may have fought a harder battle and won more victories over self than his sober accuser who is not tempted to drink. The world only knows of the defeats when it sees him drunk but is ignorant of the times when he fought and conquered. Too often

"We atone for the sins we are inclined in By damning those we have no mind to."

Thy Brother's Keeper. The apostle makes it plain that no one is responsible nor will anyone be held accountable for the folly, mistakes or sins of others. To his own Master each must stand or fall. "But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Every person will be held responsible who by act or example puts temptation in another's way. He is responsible who risks the safety of others. Paul was only stating a fact of common law. A man may not keep a dog unchained that is a menace to the passer by: he must keep his premises in sanitary condition lest poison germs be bred, and may not weaken the health of the community by mingling freely with his fellows if he has an infectious disease or has been exposed to contagion. Though he owns the land, the realty owner may not dig a pit in his own ground and leave it uncovered lest another's safety be exposed. But what of the moral pitfalls; of the contagion of the brothel; of the saloon, that breeding place of vice; of the unleashed gamblers and gambling

places that threaten the moral safety of youth, too oft sanctioned by the ballots of Christian men, and their existence ever due to the torpitude and indifference of professed servants of Christ?

For Whom Christ Died. Paul has the training of a lawyer and he is of too logical a mind to argue whether Jew or Gentile is right in regard to these traditions. The main argument is, destroy not him "for whom Christ died." With what majesty the apostle has clothed weakness! That weak chin, the irresolute lips, those wavering eyes have all come under the blood and they are sacred.

For His Sake. In the early years of Frances E. Willard's temperance itinerary she spoke in a certain church in a mining city. After an ardent but vain appeal for signers to the pledge she left her place in the pulpit and canvassed the audience, going to a half-intoxicated young miner, who refused with an oath. "For your mother's sake," Miss Willard urged, and the lad replied with such language as no sober man would have used in regard to his mother. "For your sweetheart's sake, for the sake of the girl who will some day be your wife," Miss Willard again urged, only to be more rudely repulsed. "For your own sake." The lad was bound for perdition and plainly told Miss Willard so. Then the saintly reformer put a small white hand on the miner's grimy coat sleeve, "My brother, won't you sign the pledge for the sake of the Christ that is in you?" "Ah," said the man long years afterward, "that broke me all up. Many a time I had been told I had the devil in me, but no one had ever seen Christ in me before." He signed the pledge and surrendered to Christ.

Protect Your Good Name. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. A man's Christian reputation is his best capital as a religious worker; whenever that reputation suffers, his influence goes below par and when it is lost he is a bankrupt as far as Christian influence in the community is concerned. Does not the Christian who indulges in questionable amusements pay too dearly for the doubtful pleasures? Paul spoke not as a lawyer but as a solid business man might of the conservation of capital when he urged, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."

The Kingdom of God. A decision for the right never incurs sacrifice, it only means a change of values and the substitution of the real for the false. The pleasures of sin are always coarse, often bestial and ever unsatisfying; the bubbles gone, champagne palls upon the taste; a night's frolic means a morning's headache. Self-indulgence suffers

the pangs of gout, dyspepsia and a train of other ills, while Self-Control has as her attendants, health, wholesomeness, happiness, success and honor. The Heavenly Father knoweth how to give good things to those who come to Him. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Things Worth Striving For. Paul may have been a man of insignificant stature and halting, stammering speech, but what far-reaching vision was his, what sublime appreciation of the false and the real What after all has the world to give but meat and drink, a little more or less highly seasoned, more or less delicately served, but only meat and drink. The only things worth seeking are those which are a training for better service to humanity.

a training for better service to humanity.

The Work of God. There is a great work of God going on in the world: the spiritual, moral and physical regeneration of the individual, the nation and the governments of the world. Every saloon that is voted out; every evil resort closed; every sin that is overcome; every soul brought nearer to Christ; every good that is ushered into the world; every disease overthrown: all are a part of the work of God. For meat destroy not His work. For earthly advantage, gain or comfort, do not thwart God's will.

The Ultimate Good. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended or is made weak." The greatest good for the greatest number; this is the larger liberty which towers above the so-called personal liberty. We have no liberty which conflicts with another's good. It has been well said that Robinson Crusoe was the only character who could claim the right of personal liberty, since no other's safety or welfare was endangered by anything Defoe's stranded hero might do so long as he lived alone on his island. But the moment the man Friday appeared on the scene, Crusoe's personal liberty ended; there were now two to be considered instead of one. Christian liberty by liberating us from the law of self, brings freedom to live for others.

Quiz. 1. What two divisions in the church at Rome? 2. State some of the traditions for which the Jewish members stood. 3. What Christian virtue did Paul commend to them? 4. What gives value to every soul? 5. What is the duty of the strong? 6. Which is the greater, Christian liberty or larger liberty?

Seed Thoughts. 1. God is the real judge; man is only self-appointed. 2. It is ours to save, not condemn. 3. Every soul has been paid for in such precious coin that all the riches of the world are not equivalent to the value of the poorest soul. 4. "Personal liberty" is the autocratic demand of the tyrant; Christian liberty is loving solicitude for others. 5. One's pleasure is often another's destruction.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.

But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we



are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of your's become a



to them that
are weak.
For if any
man see
thee which
hast
knowledge



shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are



And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother



for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS I COR. 8:8-13.

Prayer: Lord, May we ever be moved by Thy Divine compassion for our fellows; so teach us and guide us that our example may help others to follow Thee. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

I must the fair example set: From those that on my pleasure wait The stumbling block remove: Their duty by my life explain, And still in all my works maintain The dignity of love.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 50. Place, written from Ephesus by Paul to the church at Corinth. Persons, Paul and the Greek and Jewish converts at Corinth.

Scripture Setting: Duty to Our Brother. Responsibility toward our brother, Gen. 4:9-11. Forbidden to hate, Lev. 19:17-18. Brothers must not go to law, 1 Cor. 6:5-6. Forbearance enjoined, Col. 3:13. Wayward brother to be admonished, 2 Thess. 3:15. Weak brother to be exhorted, Heb. 3:13. Kindness enjoined, 2 Peter 1:7. Love commanded, Heb. 13:1.

Life and Conduct Setting: Paul emphasizes:
1. That custom is immaterial to salvation. 2. While the utmost liberty of conscience should be allowed, each should see that his example does not offend the weak. 3. Liberty should never become a menace to the safety of others. 4. A sin against the weakest of God's children is a sin against the Christ who purchased their salvation. 5. The duty of sacrifice of both inclination and pleasure for the safety of others.

THY BROTHER.

A Question of Every-day Life. Members of the church at Corinth had sent a letter to Paul submitting among other subjects, that of the lawfulness of their eating meat that had been offered to idols. When the gods and the priest had received their share of the flesh of the animals that had been sacrificed to the false gods at the various heathen temples, it was the custom to sell at least a part of the remainder to the butchers. It was not always easy for the consumer to know whether his purchase belonged to that particular class of meat or not, since it was for sale at every stall in the market. Moreover its cheapness and excellent quality rendered it especially desirable to the poorer classes to whom the Christians mostly belonged. Indeed such meat was considered so choice that it was frequently sent by the offerers to friends and relatives or used at dinners to which those who had offered the sacrifice would invite their neighbors. These feasts often accompanied with Greek choruses, athletic contests and other recreations were the chief source of social enjoyment, and the Christian who attended must have idol flesh set before him, or by refusing to attend cause his own exclusion from the social life of his heathen neighbors, friends and relations. What course would Paul recommend?

Worldly Conformity. Looking backward through the centuries the question seems so puerile and childish that we wonder that Paul gave it serious consideration. Yet it involved much. Heathenism was so universal that the question confronted the Corinthian Christian on every side. Where every house had its special protecting god, to appease whom some portion of every meal was laid

upon the family altar; when one member of that family became a Christian he would at once become confronted by the question as to whether conformity with his family custom was not compromise with idolatry. A birthday, perhaps, of a beloved father or mother; the marriage of a brother or sister; the safe return from the sea of a dear friend, were all the occasion of a celebration, with its customary sacrifice in some public temple of heathendom. Was the young convert justified in attending such a feast? There were national celebrations also; should the Christian bring his patriotism and good citizenship into question, or should he be false to his new religion? Though under different conditions, the church is confronted by the same problem today. Christian consistency often involves self-exile from society and fashion, a sense of aloofness in the family circle and political excommunication.

Harmless but Harmful. Paul might have quoted Malachi's condemnation of such a practice or the action of the Council of Jerusalem which commanded Gentile converts to abstain from meats offered to idols, for Paul himself had obtained that deliverance, and commended it, but he would have them make a voluntary choice. Since the idols to which the meat was offered were false gods and they as Christians denied the sacredness of such an offering, such meat was in no wise different from any other animal flesh and might be eaten without sin. But there were temptations to be considered; wine was always served at such feasts and drunkenness so common that a drunkard and a Corinthian were held to be the same thing; greed for gain and shady practices for get-

ting it: knavery of all kinds had so lowered the whole moral fiber of the Corinthian people that the continued close intercourse which would result from conformity along other lines might seduce the new convert into other and real evils. While some might eat without the slightest idolatrous feeling, others, through hearing and seeing the ceremonial rites of their former worship, might become backsliders. A thing may be harmless of itself, but through evil associations and environment may work disastrous results. Some time ago a reformed drunkard, extremely ill in a sleeping car, was offered a dose of medicine by the occupant of the upper berth who had used the same remedy often and safely; but the alcohol in the compound so awakened the slumbering demon of appetite as to cause the fall of the other.

The Power of Example. "Neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak." It is a question of others. A friendly game of cards with some small trophy as a prize and incentive to greater interest may never tempt one of the players to haunt the public gambling house and hazard his money, but to thy brother-to the man whose veins burn with the speculative mania, or to the boy too young to make the nice distinction between public and private games and between a "prize" and a "stake," the little social game may be a stumbling block to which later a confirmed gambler dates his fall. The cigar smoked by that good Christian man may never upset mental or nervous equilibrium, but the weak-willed, immature lad may stumble over it into a cigaret fiend's grave. An occasional glass of wine may seemingly work no harm to the moderate drinker but somewhere a drunkard lies in the gutter from his example.

Thy Weak Brother. Very earnestly Paul asks, "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" Centuries before Robert Burns' immortal poem saw the light, Paul taught that "a man's a man for a' that." In Paul's eyes each of his fellow mortals wore a patent of nobility written in the indelible blood of a crucified Christ. Shall one man's strength cause another's destruction? We are under obligation as Christians to consider others. If Christ so loved that poor, stumbling drunkard; that weak, emasculated cigaret fiend as to shed His precious blood and give His life for him, shall we not give

up our petty inclinations and puerile pleasures to save him from destruction?

Heroism. A building is burning; the stronger ones fight their way through the flames to safety, but there is one imprisoned inmate of the burning building too weak to force his way and make his escape. Do the others leave him to be destroyed because he is weak? Thank God such selfish cowardice is not the rule of conduct. At the risk of their own lives and of forfeiting the safety for which they fought the flames, they return to the burning building and rescue the weak brother.

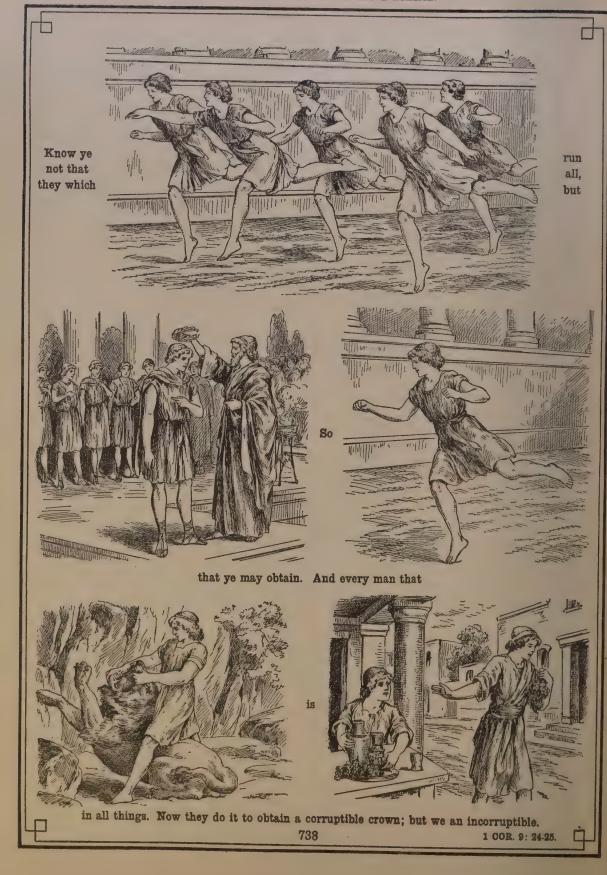
Ye Did It Unto Me. When your example leads another astray, or when you wound a weak conscience, "ye sin against Christ." It becomes no longer a question of sinning against the weak brother but of sinning against our Elder Brother. "Let whiskey alone and it will let you alone." said a professed Christian who intended to vote to license the saloon, but that night he had a strange dream. He saw poor old "Whiskey Jones" a corpse, and as the body was lowered into a drunkard's grave he saw the shadow of a cross fall athwart the coffin and heard a voice say, "Again ye have crucified me afresh!" and lo, a cross on which was the crucified Christ marked the grave. He awoke from sleep, but the question of "wet or dry" thereafter appeared in a new light to one voter.

Love and Liberty. How Paul towered above the pleasure seeking Corinthians. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Elsewhere the apostle tells us the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world through the cross of Christ. He bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, and in his spirit, the stamp of the sacrificial Christ. Have we attained Paul's stature?

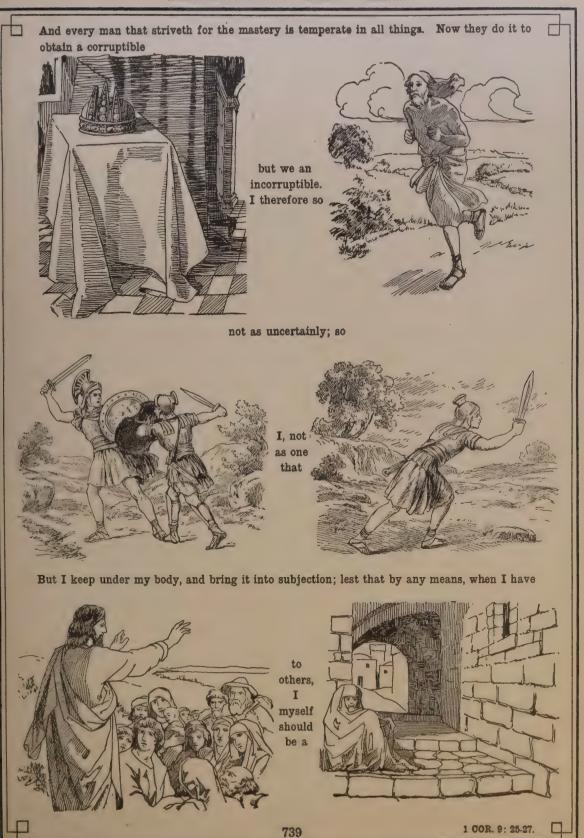
Quiz. 1. For what was the city of Corinth noted? 2. What can you say of the environment of the Corinthian Christians? 3. What was the course pursued by Daniel and his three companions under similar conditions? 4. What was Paul's attitude toward the question? 5. Upon what did he base his plea? 6. Whom should we consider in relation to our attitude toward un-Christian practices of today?

practices of today?

Seed Truths. 1. Though conditions have changed considerably, the problems of the first and twentieth centuries are much the same. 2. Every earnest soul is confronted by the question of conformity or consistency. 3. He who carries the banner of Christ high aloft and would not lower his colors finds himself with but a corporal's guard of followers. 4. Many sins are committed in the name of liberty. 5. Example is our most fearful responsibility. 6. Sacrifice and love for others are essential to Christian living. 7. "For thy brother's sake" is the most cogent argument against any evil. 8. The weakness of another should appeal to the strong.



THE RACE AND THE PRIZE.



THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT, 1 COR. 9:24-27. READ ALSO PHIL. 3:12-14.

Prayer: Lord, Help us to gain the mastery of self. May we sacrifice every inclination that is contrary to Thy will and ever hold before us the prize of the high calling of God through Christ Jesus, Amen.

Awake my soul, stretch every nerve, And press with vigor on; A Heavenly race demands thy zeal, And an immortal crown.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 59. Place, Lephesus, where the letter was written. Persons, Paul and Corinthian Christians.

Scriptural Setting: The Victorious Christian. Strength, courage and obedience requisites of victory, Josh. 1:7. Puts Christ first, Phil. 3:8. Overcomes sin, 1 John 2:13. Victory won through faith, 1 John 5:4. Sons of God, Rev. 21:7. Victorious over death, 1 Cor. 15:54-57. To reign with Christ, Rev. 3:21.

Life and Conduct Setting: The special features

of Paul's illustration are: 1. That not all who enter the Christian life continue therein. 2. Not all who cry, "Lord, Lord," shall gain a reward.
3. The Christian life must conform to Christ's rules. 4. Success depends upon the individual.
5. Temperance is one of the requisites of a Christian life. 6. The superiority of the Christian's hope. 7. Decision of character and earnestness of spirit are necessary. 8. The necessity of self-control. 9. No Christian may consider himself safe from temptation to fall.

HOW THE PRIZE WAS WON.

The Isthmian Games. The games were one of the four great national festivals of the Greeks, held every second or third year. Seven miles from Corinth rose an ampitheater and stadium or race-course, each an enclosed oval and both built of white marble, where the games were held. None but Greek citizens of pure blood and irreproachable record were allowed to contend in them. So popular were they that even the hostilities of war were suspended during the celebrations of the games. Multitudes of spectators came to view these games, which in-cluded wrestling, foot races and other ath-letic sports, with horse and chariot racing. Paul would teach that life is a race, less spectacular and to most of us without the accompaniment and inspiration of cheering multitudes, but as earnest and as strenuous as any ever run in the stadium.

Many Entries. Scarcely a greater honor could be earned by a Greek citizen than that of prize winner at these games. Not an athlete in all Greece, not a charioteer of promise who failed to enter the field. All desired the prize. So today, it almost seems as though the men are many and the deeds are few; every profession crowded, every calling overdone. "All the world has entered for a prize and it is useless to strive," say the timid youth. In every human heart, it matters not how indifferent or debased, there is a chord that is responsive to the good. No one starts out in life intending crime or sin. All are striving, however indifferently, after the right; all desire to win Heaven.

The Race. "Know ye not that they which run the race run all, but one receives the prize?" The race is to begin, the line of contestants is already formed, so many of them that they fairly crowd each other for space in which to swing free arms and legs.

There are many favorites who receive the plaudits of their friends. At last all is ready, the signal is given and they are off. Some fall out early, discouraged. Others, their heads turned to catch the admiring huzzahs of the crowd, stumble and fall out by the way; many drop down exhausted to be carried off by sympathizing friends or attendants.

One Winner. But there is one whose firm flesh, clear complexion and far-seeing eyes marked him from the start as one prepared by a life of self-mastery and training for this supreme effort. He has endurance, his muscles are of iron, every tendon taut; he has a single purpose, with no eyes for the shouting multitude of onlookers, and his gaze fixed on the goal. He is not discouraged, does not stumble or fall, and at last the prize is his. Lucky? The prizes of life are not won by luck or chance.

Ficking a Boy. Recently an employer advertised for a boy. Sixty answered the advertisement and each was ushered into the same great room and left to wait an hour. Finally the man of business entered. Each lad was scrutinized quickly and within ten minutes without any questions or parley the employer singled out a boy and engaged him for the place. A friend who had watched the procedure asked the man how he arrived at his choice. "First," said the employer, "I stood outside a few minutes before I entered. The door was ajar. I heard one boy swear in impatience, another whiled away the time by whistling a bar of music from a popular but improper song. I saw another take a lozenge to disguise the odor of liquor. When I entered I looked the boys over very closely and chose one whose fingers showed no cigaret stains, whose eyes were clear and who had been occupying his time with a study book."

Striving for the Mastery. It is useless to enter a race unless you adhere to the rules which govern the contest. "So run that ye may obtain." "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." The athlete must submit to rules and restrictions

and months of training. He must forego indulgence in many things, and the world of sport is growing more rigid in its demands of total abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. All the prominent athletic clubs require total abstinence when preparing men for any meet. Those who use alcohol make a dash at first but cannot endure, and fall behind at the finish, in the foot races those who use alcohol are the first to drop out by the way. Total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks is required during the season of all football and baseball teams.

Weston the Walker. At seventy Weston, a total abstainer, was able to repeat the pedestrian feat he had accomplished forty years before by walking across the continent. In the race for business and professional success the rules against the use of alcohol and tobacco are rapidly becoming as stringent. The cigaret smoker is now barred from more than one hundred different lines of business and trades, while a temperance order prohibiting the use of intoxicants habitually or while on duty extends to over 1,000,000 railway employes.

The Two Prizes. Though Christ's promise to those who seek first the kingdom of Heaven includes an earthly reward, Paul is not inciting these Corinthian Christians to righteousness merely as a means to worldly attainment. That was gained by the victor of any Ithmian game, who not only won honor for himself and his family, but even for his town, where he was welcomed home with all the honors of a military hero, the very walls of the city being thrown down that he might enter as a conqueror; his statue was set up by his fellow citizens and a tablet built into the walls of the ampitheater to commemorate his deed. Gold was awarded him also from the city treasury, while the greatest poets celebrated his victory in song. To Paul the value of earthly honors and gain was signified by the pine wreath which was the avowed reward for which the contestants in these games strove. All was as transient as the wreath of pine, which withered within a short year. "Now they do it to obtain a corruptable crown; but we an incorruptible." Eternal life, eternal glory, eternal honor, eternal riches are the prize for which the Christian strives.

A Straight Course. There is no uncertainty in life's course. One always arrives at the point he is headed for. The cigaret fiend is headed for the insane asylum and

arrives all too soon. The young man who spends his earning at the pool table and for drink, runs his course as an embezzler and ends in a drunkard's grave or the prison. Garfield could run the race from the tow path to the White House, but Benedict Arnold, with youth, wealth and valor as a starting point, ran the race of profligacy to a traitor's grave. Then Paul urges, Be in earnest; do not fight as one beating the air. In the temperance warfare too much effort has been spent beating the air: high sounding resolutions and sonorous prayers when the occasion calls for Christian action and Christian ballots.

Master or Servant. Ah, Paul has found the real source of failure, the real cause of defeat—Self! "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection." What an exquisite piece of machinery is the body and how wonderful its mechanism, formed by the great Master Mechanic for His service and glory, but degraded and enfeebled by self-indulgence till it dishonors the Creator and destroys the soul that inhabits it. "I keep under" in Paul's time was a technical term of the games and meant to strike full in the face: the most damaging blow one boxer could give another. Against every unholy desire and evil appetite of the body Paul directed his hardest, most firmly planted blows. No one may hope to win whose body is master instead of servant.

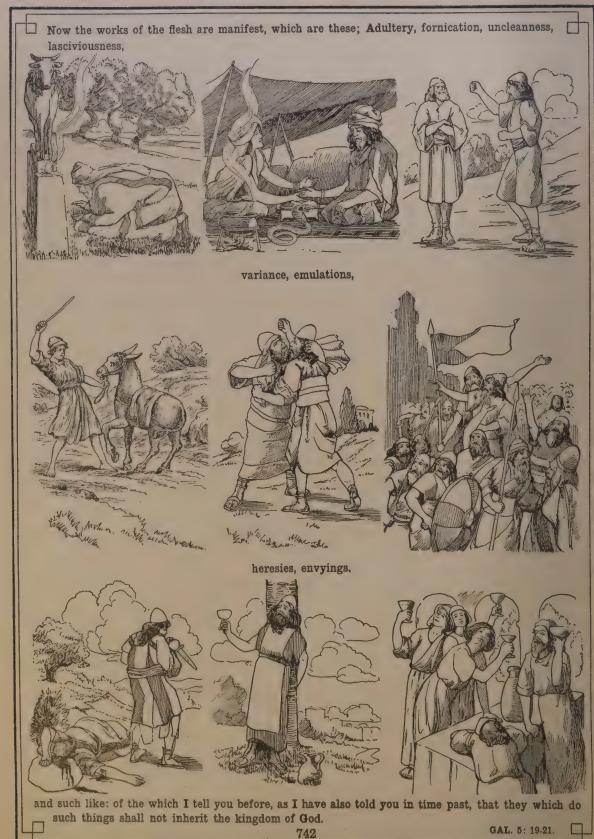
A Castaway. Paul has seen many of the derelicts of life. Life's course is strewn with failures; youths who have started out bent upon winning one of life's prizes, but through strong drink have stumbled and lost; those of bright mind and high intellect, who, intoxicated by the plaudits of men and advances of evil, have lifted their eyes from the goal and fallen through impurity. A moment's temptation has ruined many a man who has failed to keep his body under and in subjection to Christ. Others have counted the prize not worth the sacrifice and exertion and have failed through lack of earnestness, while all too great a number, through lack of singleness of purpose, have missed the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

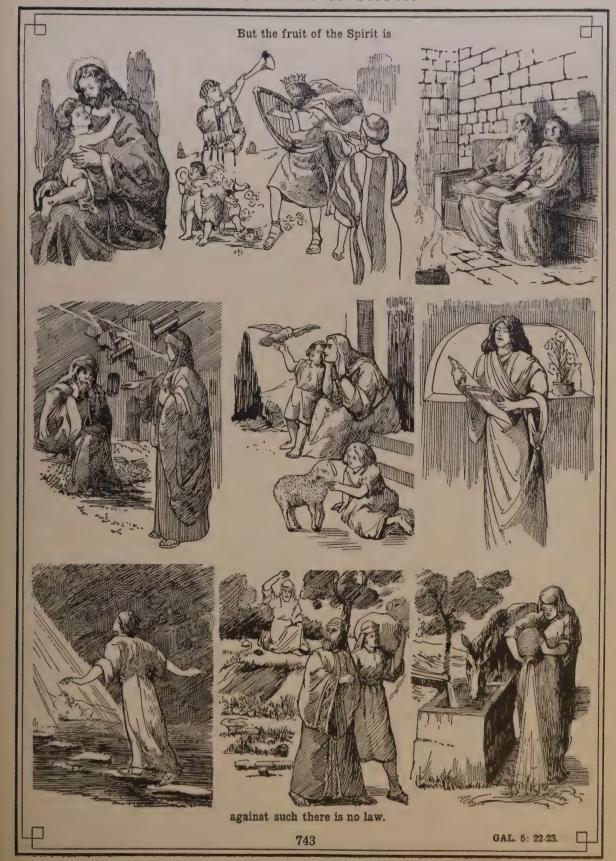
Quiz. 1. What athlete named in the Bible was a total abstainer? 2. To what may we liken the Christian life? 3. What does Paul emphasize as a requisite to success? 4. To what other church did Paul use the same figure of speech in an exhortation to earnestness of purpose?

Seed Thoughts. 1. Paul, the fisher after men, bated them with loving tenderness. 2. In the race for Heaven the prize is set before every one and all may win. 3. Character lasts through eternity; love never fails, and purity endures forever. 4. The man who does not know where he is at nor where he is goings fails to achieve success. 5. When the devil fails to derail a Christian he tries to sidetrack him.

MARGARET WINTEINGER.

TWO KINDS OF FRUIT.





THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS GAL. 5:19-23. READ JAMES 3:14-18.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Teach us to avoid the sins of the flesh and so chasten and instruct us in Thy word that we may bear the peaceable fruits of righteousness. For Jesus sake, Amen.

"Sorrow must crop each passion shoot, And pain each lust infernal Or human life can bear no fruit To life eternal."

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 55. Place, Antioch, whence Paul sent his letter to the churches of Galatia. Person, Paul.

Scripture Setting: Good and Evil Fruit. Deceitful fruit, Hos. 10:13. Punished according to fruit, Jer. 21:14. Reward according to fruit, Jer. 32:19. A test of character, Matt. 7:16-20. Fruit of eternal life, John 4:36. Good fruit lasting, John 15:16. Fruit of spirit, Eph. 5:9. Peaceable fruit of righteousness, James 3:17-18.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS

Life and Conduct Setting: The special lessons which Paul sought to impress through this illustration are: 1. That the heart is naturally evil and the flesh at enmity with God. 2. That the works of the natural man are evil. 3. Sins spring from the same cause. 4. Sin cannot enter the kingdom of God. 5. The fruits of the Spirit. 6. The walk and life of the regenerate man bear the fruits of righteousness. 7. The liberty of the righteous.

A FOOLISH AND BEWITCHED PEOPLE.

A Special Message. Paul's letter to the Galatians is fraught with special interest to us, since it was written to a people who were in a sense our forbears. The term Galatian is equivalent to Gaul or Kelt, and the "foolish Galatians," whom he rebuked with equal tenderness and sternness, were a fragment of that great and virile race which spread over western Europe and from which the people of the western part of England Scotland, and of Ireland and France sprang. Epistle to the Galatians is, therefore, a hand mirror which we may take up at our leisure and in it trace our resemblance to these early Christians of our race, seeing mirrored in the picture whose contrasting shades Paul has painted with the skill of a Rembrandt, our own weakness and strength, our own sins and virtues.

Of the Same Family Tree. These early Galatians belonged to a race which had even defeated the proud Romans with total overthrow and a subjugation so complete that the warlike Romans were forbidden the use of iron except for implements of husbandry. And though the shame of that defeat was wiped out by a final victory for the Romans, the Gallic intruders stubbornly held their ground and for more than a century and a half, maintained their own government in the face of the fact that they were a conquered people in the midst of the victor's territory, and even when brought under the rule of Rome they maintained their distinctive character and speech. The present day branch of their race are also empire builders, but have we the tenacity of character to endure under defeat? They were a generous, warm-hearted, enthusiastic people so hospitable and fond of a popular hero that when Paul came to them sick and won their hearts, they received him "as an angel from Heaver" and "would have given their eyes" for him, but within five years they ism reigned. There were gods of the earth,

have deserted the religion they so gladly accepted, and Paul, once their idol, must needs defend himself from their aspersions. Have we the same national traits? Might not our national heroes recite a like tale of ingratitude and are the great religious awakenings which sweep our land more lasting? As we study we shall see a marked family resemblance in the fruits of our civilization and those which Paul attributes to these far off cousins of ours.

A Rotten Crop. "Every tree is known by his own fruit," and the fruits of the first century of the Christian era were poisonous indeed. What a noxious crop Paul arrays before us! Four chief sins of impurity, two of impiety and nine sins of enmity. Society in Paul's day was steeped in immorality. The fearful belief in a double standard of morals for the sexes, was in full force, with its results disastrous alike to home and state. Since brave sons are the issue of strong fathers, small wonder that Greece and Rome alike declined in military prowess and civic courage under the decay of manly virtue. But Paul declares not only against the most heinous and criminal forms of impurity; the terms of uncleanness and lasciviousness include whatever is contaminating in look or word, thought or gesture, in dress or costume, as well as the more open and shameless uncleanness of filthy jest, debauchery and sensuality. There are eyes that have grown so evil through the vile pictures and scenes that have left their evil image upon the retina, that to meet their ogling stare is "to look through the doors of hell." One evil word, one obscene picture, will inoculate a whole school with the awful contagion of impurity. Rotten to the core are the first four varieties of evil fruit Paul enumerates.

Evil Fruits. Next to the fruits of lust, Paul places idolatry. In those days, polythesea and sky, gods and goddesses of war. agriculture, handcraft, art and music: even gods who ministered to lust and sin. longer in the civilized world do men make, for gods, images of men or four-footed and creeping things, but can we say that man does not still make gods with his own hands? One man's god is his business; to it he gives the time of the holy Sabbath; another's god is his political party, and on its altar he renounces and sacrifices principle, consistency and right. Others become the votaries of pleasure and discard the family altar for the theater or dance; many join in the drunken worship and revels of the worshippers of Bacchus. Then there is the man who denies the existence of the one true God and would have us believe that all the wonders of this beautiful world are due to some sorcery of nature instead of the Divine Creator

From the Same Branch. "Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife. seditions, heresies, envyings, murders"—all fruits of the natural heart which is at enmity with God. What wretched consequences follow the absence of love. Paul knew the Galatians; like the Celt, the Briton and Teuton -the Gauls of today-they had high capability, reaching out after culture and intellectual attainment, so that Paul could write to them in classic Greek; they were generous, enthusiastic and open friends or open foes; he did not need to warn them of treachery or meanness. But they were high tempered and quarrelsome, a fighting people as are the Gallic nations today. What a bloody record of war is the history of every Gallic country. Those who boast of their high spirit and hold their quick temper as an evidence of strong character would do well to notice that Paul has catalogued the fruit of the natural heart with murder and sedition—crimes punishable with death.

A Lost Man. For more than fifty years a hundred pounds has lain in the Bank of England, ready for the claimant who can prove that he and his family have in nowise suffered from the effect of intemperance, but that man has never been found.

The Husbandman. The history of horticulture has been the history of magic genii, who with fairy wand have made the rod blossom and bear, and the wand has been the pruning hook. Every fruit has been domesticated and made appetizing through cultivation. That luscious apple had for its progenitor the wild crab. What wonders have been wrought through Luther Burbank, the wizard of horticulture, who has made the fruit of the wild cactus edible and palatable. But no triumph of horticulture has equaled that of the Di-

vine Husbandman, who has transformed the bitter fruits of the natural heart into the fruits of the Spirit.

The Grafted Fruit. With a sweep of the hand Paul has brushed away the untempting array of natural fruit which he set before the Galatians and in its place he brings us specimens from the grafted tree of the Holv Spirit. They are arranged in three groups love, joy and peace. God's choicest fruit. Then the virtues toward others-long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith; and to one's self-meekness and temperance. Paul. the Christian philosopher, differs from the philosophers of heathendom, who placed wisdom first and righteousness last and who had no place for gentleness and humility. Love and joy go hand in hand. Selfishness and sensuous gratification may bring hilarity, but Joy and her twin sister. Peace. never abide with a troubled or outraged conscience.

The Perfect Fruit of Righteousness. "Meekness and temperance; against such there is no law." Beginning in love, ending in temperance, such is the Christian life. Paul would make it plain that the law does not curtail liberty or impose penalties upon those who do right. "Against such there is no law."

Rejected and Chosen. Paul has used his colors to produce the greatest light and shade. The fruits of evil are swallowed in darkness. "For they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." They have been condemned and are, therefore, to be destroyed. But those who bear the fruits of the Spirit enter into the larger liberty. Wise husbandman as he is, having held before our progenitors the beautiful fruits of righteousness, he closes with fit words of advice: "If you would bear such fruit, use the pruning knife; cut off every diseased branch, each infected twig. Crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.' Character is only gained by constant watchfulness, repression and sacrifice.

Quiz. 1. To whom was Paul writing? 2. What can you say of these Galatians? 3. Have we any of their national or individual traits? 4. What did Christ say to the barren fig tree? 5. Does the Bible command fruitfulness?

Seed Thoughts. 1. There is no aristocracy of sin and crime, 2. There are no small sins in the eyes of God. 3. The kingdom of God is too fair an inheritance to be given to the children of darkness. 4. Evil fruit is condemned as a matter of public safety. 5. The fruits of the Spirit all bear the blue ribbon. 6. Law does not infringe on the rights of those who do right.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

WISE WALKING.



circumbut as



Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not



with



wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;



to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual



and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving



always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EPH. 5: 15-20.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS EPH. 5:15-20.

Prayer: Lord, Help us to walk in Thy law and in Thy light; may we walk uprightly and worthily. Teach us the good way that we may walk therein. For Christ's sake, Amen.

When we walk with the Lord In the light of His Word, What a glory He sheds on our way!

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 64. Place, Rome. Person, Paul.

Person, Paul.

Scripture Setting: The Christian Walk. A covenant walk, Gen. 17:1, 2. Must be taught to walk, Ex. 18:20. In integrity, Psa. 26:1. Honestly, I Thess. 4:12. Uprightly, Psa. 84:11. Worthily, Eph. 4:1. Humbly, Mic. 6:8. In the fear of the Lord, Acts 9:31. By faith, 2 Cor. 5:7. In tried paths, Jer. 6:16. By rule, Gal. 6:16. Directed by God, Jer. 10:23. In the way, Isa. 30:21. At liberty, Psa. 119:45. In the midst of trouble, Psa. 138:7.

Through the valley of death, Psa. 23:4. The re-

deemed walk with God, Isa. 35:8-10.

Life and Conduct Setting: Paul seeks to im-ress Christians with: 1. The importance of a press Christians with: 1. The im to distinguish between wisdom and folly. 3. The strenuosity of the Christian life. 4. A closer knowledge of God's will. 5. The sinfulness of drunkenness and other excesses. 6. He also advises: (1) The higher life of the Spirit. (2) Religious fellowship, song and praise. (3) Thankfulness to the Heavenly Father.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

The Strenuous Life. Verily, "There is nothing new under the sun!" More than Walking Safely. There is much in a man's walk. The boy who slouches along is not apt to impress others as an energetic youth; eighteen centuries before the advent of Thea halting step denotes indecision, and it is odore Roosevelt, Paul was preaching the hard to trust one with a shambling walk strenuous life to the early Christians, urging while those who walk with firm tread, sure them to awake from their sleep, to arise from bearing and erect carriage inspire the onthe dead apathy and indifference into which looker with confidence in their ability and they had fallen, "redeeming the time because the days are evil." Evil days, indeed, energy. Of insignificant stature himself. Paul had the admiration of all small men for when cruel Nero reigned as emperor! A perfect physical development. A prisoner in prisoner of the Lord, himself, Paul foresaw the persecution of the church of Christ. Rome, he must often have watched and admired the poise of the centurion and soldier. Within a year after the epistle was written, who walked not as slaves but as freemen, Rome was burned, and ere its fires were aland with his usual habit of illustrating his layed, the streets of the Imperial city began teaching, he writes, "See, then, that ye walk to flow with Christian blood. In four years circumspectly." After all, walking is a mat-St. Paul and St. Peter were martyred in ter of eyesight; you must see where your Rome, and Nero, the tyrant, had fallen by an feet are going or, as the old adage has it, assassin's hand; only six years till the cap-"Look before you leap." If the one telling ture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the the first lie could see into what a tangled temple and the crushing out of the Jewish web of deception it would lead; if the youth national life. It behooved these early Chriswho took the first step in impurity could see tians to redeem the time, but is not king the black pit into which he must fall; if the alcohol as cruel and bloody a tyrant as the Roman emperor? Already the temperance boy taking the first glass could see the cause has its martyrs in the persons of the brave Haddock, the daring Roderick Dhu Gambrel and poor Carl Etherington. skies are portentious, the days are evil, and unless Christian people redeem the time, who can fail to foresee evils that mean the destruction of the church, and the overthrow of the principles on which our nation was founded? Shall we not stand for the Christian Sabbath, the abolition of the drink traf-

> fic and civic righteousness? The Will of the Lord. "It is the will of Allah," says the Mohammedan, as he submits alike to good and evil, but the Apostle Paul is preaching not fatalism, but close communion with God. Enoch walked with God and pleased Him. "It is not in man who walketh to direct his steps," and he who

drunkard's grave at the end, all would see that they walked safely. Folly Versus Wisdom. "Not as fools, but as wise." There are those who laugh at the Christian life and cherish the idea that worldliness and unbelief are a sign of superiority. The boy who smokes cigarets laughs at his wiser playmate as a "sissy," unaware that the cigaret has been aptly described as "a little roll of tobacco with a little fire at one end and a little fool at the other." The champagne drinking youth who squanders his money and ruins his brains has lots of fun at the expense of his sober fellow clerk, until some morning the two are called into the manager's office, the one to receive a discharge, the other for promotion.

rises and enters upon the day's duties and pleasures without the quiet talk with God that is found in prayer, will stumble and fall. He will not walk wisely.

Moody's Walk. In the early days of D. L. Moody's evangelism he returned from a three weeks' service in a certain town much cast down because not a single conversion had resulted from his efforts. "Get closer to God, Brother Moody," asid a wise old minister. "It has not yet been revealed to the world what He can accomplish through one who is wholly given to Him." The words bore fruit in Moody's entire consecration to God's will and soon thereafter followed that wonderful revival across the sea, where scores of thousands were led to take up the Christian walk through Moody's preaching.

The Stumbling, Reeling Walk. The cities of Asia Minor remind us of the woman who belonged to so many clubs that she was "club-footed." Certainly they were equipped with as many social clubs as any twentiethcentury city. The club feasts in which wine was served were a favorite social diversion. Those advocates of moderation who advise the use of wine to stem the tide of intemperance might study with profit Paul's letters to the wine growing and wine drinking countries of his time. The eastern coast of the Mediterranean is the ancient home of the vine. The people, a sociable race, drank not for animal indulgence but for good fellowship. But what was the result? Their wit was ribald, music and song were debased and their chief citizens reeled through the streets, all under the influence of wine. Paul had another reason for the command, "Be not drunk with wine." The letter containing this warning was carried by Tychicus, who was accompanied by Onesimus, a fugitive pagan slave who had robbed his master, fled from Colosse and found his way to Rome, where he naturally gravitated to the most loathsome plague spots of that corrupt city. Out of the depths he had been converted to Christ through the preaching of Paul, who became surety for the amount he had stolen, and he was now returning to his master accompanied by Tychicus, who bore a letter from Paul recommending him to the mercy of Philemon, his master. The poor, twice-bound slave saved as a brand from the burning, needed the admonition, and for the sake of this weak brother, the other Christians needed to be reminded of the duty of total abstinence.

The Spirit Filled Life. Let them be filled with the Spirit. No need to resort to a false

stimulation in the pursuit of happiness when joy abounds and happiness reigns in the Christian life. No need to go about with a long face, and mournful step. "I wonder why that woman always looks so happy. She has had trouble enough to crush ten ordinary women," so spoke a worldly man of one of God's chastened saints. "True," said her pastor, "but she has the joy of the Spirit."

Walking in Christian Fellowship. Paul does not ask them to sacrifice their social instincts, nor would be deprive Christians of the pleasure of music. As in their heathen days they used to speak to each other on festive and religious occasions, so now let them speak to each other in the new language of Christ Jesus. If a history of the Christian hymns were written we would find they have ministered to the sick and soothed the dying when medical skill was helpless; have given courage to the faint-hearted and enabled the martyrs to endure the flames unflinchingly.

A Life of Song. Paul, a prisoner at Rome, awaiting a martyr's death, would make life a song. We may picture this marvelous apostle, worn and spent in the Master's service, a man who had three times endured shipwreck; whose life had been one of constant peril on land and sea, amid robbers and his own countrymen and among the heathen, in the city and in the wilderness; who must be constantly on the watch for lurking dangers, more acquainted with pain and weariness, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, than any of the apostles. Even now, as a prisoner, he was chained by the wrist to a soldier guard and deserted by all save a few faithful converts. And still Paul writes of making melody in your heart to God!

Thanksgiving. He would have them give "thanks always for all things." If Paul facing death and martyrdom could give thanks for all things, should not we who live in this favored age count our blessings? The temperance cause may not yet be victorious, but there is cause for thanksgiving for the nine prohibition states; for a prohibition area that covers 40,000,000 people; for the scientific temperance teaching of the 30,000,000 children of the public schools, and for the growth of the temperance reform in every civilized nation.

Quiz. 1. Was the letter to the Ephesians a general letter or was it written to some special church? 2. To what church is it thought to have been written? 3. What special sin does Paul condemn? 4. How would he have Christians spend their time? 5. What special cause have you for thanksgiving?

Seed Thoughts. 1. While folly dances, wisdom walks and wins the race. 2. A good carriage is often a great aid to success. 3. Folly and sin are duplicates. 4. Wine is as debasing as whisky. 5. Discouragement, discontent and ingratitude are open gateways through which Satan enters the heart.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

SOBER LIVING.

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the



be sober, grave,



sound in



in patience. The



likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh



holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine,



of good things.



That they may teach the

to be sober, to.



to



To be discreet, chaste, keepers at



good.
obedient
to
their

own



that the word of God be not blasphemed.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS TITUS 2:1-12.

Prayer: Lord, Impress us with the importance of the little things of life; help us to perform our daily tasks as unto Thee and may we glorify Thee in our daily life. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

"Teach me, my God and King, In all things Thee to see, And what I do in anything, To do it as for Thee."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 64. Place, Nicopolis, whence letter was written. Persons, Paul, and Titus a Greek Christian.

Scripture Setting: Duties of Everyday Life. Requirements of Christian life, Deut. 10:12-13. Daily religious duties, 2 Chron. 8:14; Ezra 3:4. Duty of ministering to others, Rom. 15:27. Duty toward the needy, 1 John 3:17. Performance of duty a requirement of Christian life, Luke 17:10. The whole duty of man, Eccl. 12:13.

Life and Conduct Setting: Paul desires Titus

to impress: 1. The virtues of sobriety, seriousness and temperance, which are a crown of glory to the aged. 2. Their need of faith, charity and patience. 3. The dignity and poise which enobles age is commended to older women. 4. The wholesome example of old age. 5. The homely duties of the everyday home life upon young wives. 6. The young man's need of a serious purpose. 7. The apostle also warns Titus that example and precept must be in harmony. 8. Praises a life of self-denial and Christian consistency.

THE EVERY-DAY LIFE.

A Difficult Field. The letter to Titus was written from Nicopolis, the city of victory, founded by the Emperor Augustus in commemoration of a great victory and built on the field where his tents had been pitched during the battle of Actium. It was still a new city and like all new places, the center of a money-mad, pleasure loving people. Even while writing, Paul could see a large and a small open-air theater, a circus and a race course; but given over to pleasure as Nicopolis was, the apostle was sending written instructions to a preacher and teacher in charge of a still harder field of labor. Had not one of their own prophets said, "The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts and idle gluttons!" These islanders were profligate, riotous and bestial, possessing all the vices and very little of the culture of the Greeks and Romans. In such unfavorable soil the seed of the Gospel found lodgment, and churches had sprung into life, no one knows whence or how. When the Apostle Paul found them, the good seed was in danger of being choked by the greed for gain and the lusts and pleasures of life. was also division and contention as in every church which is at a low spiritual ebb. Paul had set Titus to organize and officer these crude societies and to teach their membership the A. B. C. of Christian living.

A Sound Old Age. Paul would make the keynote of this teaching concerning everyday living to be sobriety or sober mindedness, "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." We must not imagine that Paul was a mournful, long-faced Christian or that he would have these Cretians become melancholy Christians. If ever there was an apostle of joy, Paul was that one, singing in prison, counting suffering that would have overwhelmed an ordinary man as "light afflic-

tion." He could never have drawn such wholesome lessons from them if he had not been interested in the athletic sports of his times; moreover, he would not have exercised such a fascination over young men like Timothy, Titus, Mark and others had he taught or practised gloomy asceticism. But, like Longfellow, he would make a psalm of life. "Life is real, life is earnest." It should not be dawdled away in levity or wasted in drunkenness, therefore he paints the picture of sound and beautiful old age.

Example and Precept. Like the Master, some of Paul's closest friends were women. The art galleries of the world are filled with portraits of women painted by the world's masters, but when all these shall have faded from canvas and been lost to view, Paul's portraitures of the women he knew will still live. As long as children are born of one's children, so long shall the portrait Paul has etched in one masterly sentence inspire other grandmothers to follow the beautiful, beneficent example of Lois, grandmother of Timothy. But how different the Cretian old women! They remind one of the repulsive picture extant, of two drunken old dames wagging their heads in evil gossip while they sit over their toddy. It is a sad state of society when aged women have to be warned against the bad effects of wine, but is it not too true that drinking among a certain set of worldly, fashionable women is on the increase? Fashionable women and girls drink cocktails and wine in club houses and their example is imitated by the shop girl at the restaurants.

Honored Ones. No woman has such influence, even in the blush of youth, as in the holy calm of old age. Garfield paid his tribute to it when he turned from taking the oath of office as President of the United States to kiss the little old mother. Julia Ward Howe, truly great and blameless as a child at ninety, has set an example of "the beautiful old woman."

Home Keepers. We have no literary gem to excel king Lemuel's description of the ideal woman in Proverbs, and it is her type which Paul commends. It is good also to know that even an old bachelor like Paul distinguishes between the housekeeper and the homekeeper and in favor of the latter. Time and energy are not to be expended so much on the house and its furnishings as in the home and its inmates—the husband and children.

Shortsighted. A woman whose boy was a cigaret smoker was once invited to attend a mothers' meeting, where "How to Save the Boy" was the topic for discussion. The invitation was declined. "I must wash my lace curtains. I never neglect my housework for any outside interest," said this housekeeper. The homekeeper values a clean boy above clean curtains, and Paul would have woman bimekeepers.

In the Days of Thy Youth. "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded." We are told that the words used in the original Greek signify soundness of mental and moral constitution, which shows itself in discreet and prudent conduct, especially self-control: the mastery of one's lowest appetites and lusts. The temptations to frivolity in youth are many, and evil is on every hand. The desire for mere pleasure; to live just for fun has plunged many into the lowest depths of degradation. At first the aim of the pleasure lover may have been innocent, or at worst only selfish, but too often a career that might have been useful is blighted.

J. F. F.'s. Twenty young couples formed a society and christened it the "Just for Fun Club." They were known as the J. F. F.'s and all went very well until the letters were interpreted "Just Forty Fools." He who makes pleasure the sole object of life is indeed a fool.

The True Teacher. Titus was a Greek convert from heathenism, probably one of the converts of Paul who affectionately styles him, "mine own son after the common faith." Paul had such confidence in him that he had intrusted him with the most difficult missions, making him the bearer of the two letters to the Corinthians. The work before Titus at Crete was not a light one, and since Paul always put the right man in the right place, we may be sure that, though young in years, Titus was both exemplary in conduct and wise in his work; but so great is the necessity that preaching and practice should conform that Paul reminds the young teacher that he must show himself a pattern of good works. "When I am a big man, I am going to sell whiskey just like

you, papa," said the saloonkeeper's son. The deadly fear that his boy would pattern after him caused the father to change his vocation.

Talk or Speech. An old Indian once tried to contrast a garrulous government agent with Bishop Hare, both of whom had spoken at an Indian tribal meeting. "Him boy talk, talk," indicating the agent; then he characterized the good and wise Indian's friend, "Him man, him speech." Paul advises "Sound speech that cannot be condemned." Speech untranslated into action is mere talk. To feel warmly, talk about it and do nothing, is a waste of motive power, as if one were to fire an engine, steam up and then open the escape valve without turning a wheel. It is not enough to talk about present-day evils; high sounding resolutions are only talk, unless acted upon and lived out. The temperance cause today needs sound speech interpreted through a church in action against all the powers of evil.

The White Flower of a Blameless Life. To so live that even your worst enemy can only praise you, and that your antagonist can have no evil thing to say of you. This means a constant daily living of the gospel at home and abroad, at school and play, in the shop and in business. A good man was once told that people were slandering him. "Then I must so live that slander will fall harmless," was the rejoinder.

The Servant in the House. There was no condition so deplorable as that of the slave in Paul's day. He was classed with the brutes and his condition was worse than the brute's, yet the Apostle says that even these slaves may "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." There is no place in life so insignificant or lowly that the Christian cannot bring honor to it. There are no duties so common that their Christly performance will not ennoble them. Well has the poet said,

"Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws, Makes that and the action fine."

Quiz. 1. Who was Titus and what service did he render Paul? 2. What does the apostle desire to emphasize in this lesson? 3. To how many classes does he speak? 4. Who were the Cretians? 5. What do we know concerning Titus's later years.

Seed Thoughts. 1. God loves to put his best servants into a hard field. 2. Old age needs the adornment of all the graces. 3. The best way to attain a beautiful old age is to practice for it in youth. 4. No one is ever old who carries through life the simple heart of a child. 5. Sobriety is the cornerstone of business success. 6. The flowers of self-pleasure ripen into the passion fruit of passion. 7. That is no sermon which is not practiced at home. 8. Think before you speak, work while you speak and act after you speak. 9. There is no work so humble that it cannot be made God's calling.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

ABSTINENCE FROM EVIL

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, reveilings, banquetings, and adminished



wherein
they
think it
strange
that ye
run not
with
them to
the same
excess of



speaking evil of you: But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and





And above all things have fervent



among
yourselves:
for charity
shall
cover the
multitude
of sins.
Use



one to another without grudging.

753

1 PETER 4: 3, 4, 7-9.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS 1 PETER 4:1-8.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We would abstain from all sinful excess. May we remember that Christ suffered for our salvation. Help us, we pray Thee, to cease from sin. For Christ's sake, Amen. "Our march is forward ever, with weapons gleaming bright;

Our warfare is with sin and wrong; our watchword 'For the right';

And above us, beckoning ever, the cross of snowy white."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 60. Place, Rome. Person, Peter.

Scripture Setting: The Old and the New Man. Likeness to Adam, Job 31:33. Repentance and forgiveness, Luke 15:21-24. The old man made new, 1 Tim. 1:13. The first and the last Adam, 1 Cor. 15:45. The two images, 1 Cor. 15:49. Death and life, 1 Cor. 15:22. The transformation, Rom. 5:20-21. Redeemed, Rev. 7:13-14.

Life and Conduct Setting: Peter calls to mind the suffering Christ and declares: 1. That Christ's sufferings brought salvation from sin in the flesh.

2. Repentance is unto righteousness. 3. The follower of Christ should not fellowship with sin.

4. Each must render an account for sin. 5. The gospel was preached not only for repentance, but for godliness of life. 6. Watchfulness, sobriety and prayer are a part of Christian life. 7. The all-pervasive power of charity.

THE DIVIDING LINE.

Swimming Against the Stream. The Apostle Peter is writing to those early Christians who occupied a peculiarly exposed position. All around them were idolators; on every side sin and worldliness. Loyalty to principle and refusal to partake of the sinful life about them would actually mean a separation that amounted almost to isolation. It is not strange that the weaker and more timid Christians excused their compromise with sin by urging the suffering and sacrifice a more strict observance of Christ's teachings would cost them. Today we find boys who smoke because "one wants to do like the other fellows," and girls who are not outspoken in their convictions against drinking and the use of tobacco. They do not want to appear different from the other girls of their set that smile upon the gilded youths who violate the rules of good manners and decency by practicing both habits in the presence of women. Those in business adopt the questionable methods of their worldly competitors, because strict honesty might entail a financial loss. Christian men fellowship in politics with the adherents of the saloon and vote with the brewer, because to do otherwise might mean to throw away their vote and lose political influence. After all, it is not so very far from Asia Minor to America and the centuries that roll between are as a page in the calendar.

The Mind of Christ. It does mean a battle, a constant struggle. Peter acknowledges that, and he advises arming one's self for the strife. The fisherman disciple cannot use words with the artistic skill of Paul, so he tersely sums it all up in a sentence. "As Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself likewise with the same mind." Arm yourselves; set yourselves in battle array: be ready to go into the fight. The mind

of Christ is to be the Christian's panoply. Now, Christ's mind was opposed to all evil. He hated a lie and nailed it every time. He abhorred uncleanness, and lashed the hypocritical money changers. He had what the Christian most needs today—a mind well stored with Scripture so that when the hour of temptation came He could parry every thrust of the tempter with the Sword of His Holy Word; worst the enemy at every point, and say triumphantly, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

The Mission of Suffering. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." The crosses we shrink from prove sources of strength when we accept them. There is an old superstition that every time we sigh we lose a drop of blood from the heart and thus impair our strength, but the good old English poet was nearer right who wrote:

"The sigh, then, only is A gale to bring me sooner to my bliss."

In our temptations Peter tells us we are to consider the sufferings of Christ. How small the loss of social prestige or popularity, or the financial cost of standing for principle, when we compare these with Christ's suffering for us.

"If all men's tears were let Into one common sewer, sea and brine, What were they all, compared to Thine?"

Not as Others Do. St. Peter knew well the pleasures of the world, which he sums up in a catalogue of vices. "When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings and abominable idolatries." What a dark picture and how repulsive! When one takes the name of Christian the time is past for these.

"As Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself likewise with the same mind." Arm yourselves; set yourselves in battle array; be ready to go into the fight. The mind The Bible or Beer? Nearly eighty years ago a young German was gloriously converted to God. Whereas he had formerly read vile books, he purchased a Bible and laid it at his place of work in the brewery owned by an uncle. It did not

take long to see that a Bible was quite out of take long to see that a Bible was quite out or place in a brewery. Indeed, the sight of it angered the uncle, who ordered it to go. The nephew went with the Bible, finding a different employment. However, he still drank beer, until one day as he sat at the noonday lunch with his Bible and a glass of beer beside him, the incongruity of the two struck him. He gave up the beer, but kept the Bible. One by one his former pleasures were put to the Bible test and renounced, until at last he had only the Bible and became a Bible colporteur. But God so blessed the sacrifice that at his death more than a thousand men and women testified that the "Bible man" had been the instrument of their salvation.

The Friendship of the World. Peter had not become a fisher of men without learning their ways. "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." With fair words the saloonkeeper weaves his web for the boys: with flattery and honeved phrase the temptress throws her net, but when each is foiled, the poison of their venom would destroy those whom they could not deceive. His friends said of a certain statesman who had fought corruption, "We love him for the enemies he has made." The raillery, hatred and scorn of evil persons is less baneful than their praise.

The Final Account and Judgment. What are the revilings and penalties of this world compared to the "Well done, good and faithful servant" of the Master, on that great day when He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, with a reward for those "who live according to God in the Spirit?" How near that time seems to Peter, who heard the announcement of the angels at the ascension! "The end of all things is at hand." Ah! Peter spoke more truly than he knew. Though the world has stood nearly two thousand years since this message was written, its words were true. The end of all things which conflict with righteousness was at hand. A new era had come, and ever since the risen, conquering Christ was upborne to Heaven, the chains forged by error, ignorance, superstition, dead formalism and sin have been broken, and link by link, evil is disappearing. Of the nine evils which Plato declared could never be overcome, only three-intemperance, lust and greed still remain. Against this last unholy trinity, the church of Christ is marching, under the banner of the cross, and to the mottor,

"By this sign we conquer."
The Need of Sobriety. The Apostle has warned these early Christians against "excess of wine," but the ravage of drink is so strong that again the warning is repeated. "Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer," Christ comes to those who watch for his appearing, sometimes in a song, again in the voice of prayer or perhaps it is but a bird's note; but through the song, the prayer, or the simple trill. Christ has come to a sin-sick heart and made it whole. In this drink-cursed world how important it is that the Christian's example should be on the side of total abstinence.

The Mantle of Charity. Peter would have these Christians exercise charity among themselves. "For charity shall cover the multitude of sins." Do we not blame the drunkard, where we should exercise love?

The Power of Little Things. A poor drunkard lay in the gutter one hot summer day, a loathsome sight to all the passers by; his foul spew-stained face so covered with swarming flies as to appear black. In all the city no one was enough interested to seek to reclaim him, until a Christian woman passed by. The man's pitiable condition touched her tender heart. What to others was an object of laughter and scorn was to her a soul purchased with the Pearl of great price. There was so little she could do-only to throw her dainty, lace-trimmed handkerchief over the hot, blistered, foul, fly-covered face, to hide its disgrace and go on her way. An hour later the drunkard awakened and the dainty handkerchief spoke its message of tenderness and spurred the man to repentance and reformation. To that bit of linen, ten inches square, transformed into a mantle of charity, the world owes one of its greatest temperance reformers.

Quiz. 1. Who was Peter? 2. What can you say of his character? 3. Concerning his death?
4. Why were the early Christians looking for the speedy return of the Lord? 5. What chapter of the New Testament attests the superiority of charity over all the other virtues? 6. Why must there be a marked difference between the Christian and

the world?

Seed Truths. 1. Inclination, custom, policy, expediency and personal advantage are ofttimes those the Christian must battle. 2. God disciplines and safeguards through suffering. 3. Your enemies are those who praise you to your face and speak evil of you behind your back. 4. By their fruits ye shall know them. 5. Watchfulness and prayer are an unfailing drink cure. 6. The mantle of charity is a garment made for universal wear.

MARGARET WINTRINGER.

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.

And I saw no

therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the



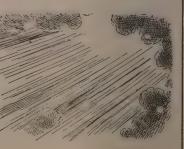
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to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the



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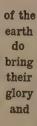
of them which are saved shall



of it: and the

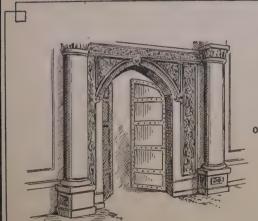


into it.





A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.



And the

of it shall not be



at all by



for there shall be no



there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the



into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that



of life

neither whatsoever
worketh
abomination,
or maketh
a lie: but
they which
are written in
the Lamb's



REV. 21: 25-27.

THE SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT IS REV. 21:22-27. **READ ALSO ISA. 60:19-22.**

Prayer: Lord, We thank thee for Thy great salvation; help us to so live that we may enter Heaven and may we lead others into the Kingdom. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

"The Kingdom that is coming Shall forever more increase Through the long, Eternal ages, Under Christ, the Prince of Peace."

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, A. D. 96. Place, Isle

of Patmos. Person, John.
Scripture Setting: The Holy City. Christ the ruler, Isa. 9:6-7. God shall dwell therein, Ezek. 43:7. The new Heaven and earth foretold, Isa. 65:17. Jerusalem the Holy City, Joel 3:17.

Life and Conduct Setting: The main facts to

be emphasized are: 1. Earthly things are not enduring. 2. The Gospel's dispensation was the beginning of a new Heaven and earth. 3. The highest worship does not require material form. 4. Christ is indeed the Light of the world. Sin and defilement have no place in the Kingdom of Christ.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

The Seer. John had been driven from Ephesus and banished to the little island of Patmos with its steep bare cliffs and rocky coast line. Here, deprived of the society of friends, he communed with the past. And what a storied past it was, what wonderful memories it held! How reminiscence must have effaced the present, requiring a great voice on that Lord's day to rouse the aged apostle from his meditations. Turning to see that wondrous voice, the vision of the golden candlestick burst upon him, and the startled John saw his Master; no longer the simple Galilean peasant, upon whose bosom the beloved disciple had often rested, but a dazzling presence clothed and panoplied in Divine majesty and glory. What wonder that the gentle John fell as if dead at the feet of his Lord.

The Vision. John's Revelation is a record of the conflict of Christ and his saints over the powers of evil and of the struggle with sin and final victory. It is greater than any national epic or folk-lore legends. It is the story of the Conqueror of conquerors, and His Beloved, the church of the living God in the accomplishment of the most heroic undertaking since the world began, a journey through the wilderness of sin to the land of promise and the attainment of universal perfection and happiness.

The Holy City. What a void John has pictured. The great Creator who fashioned. earth and sky out of nothing, has resolved them into nothing. The Seer of Patmos stands alone and looks into space; earth and heaven have passed away. John sees the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away." Wonderful vision of the Seer of Patmos that could record the passing away of the earth with all its centuries of amassed wealth, grandeur and magnificence, in half a sentence! Would not its temptations and lose their weight if we could see their triviality demonstrated as did John?

Ezekiel had seen the New Jerusalem in his distant day. Isaiah had pictured its bulwarks and highways. It is the kingdom of this world, conquered in His name, cleansed and purified by His regenerating power and redeemed through His blood. It was ushered in by Christ's coming on earth, for He is its Chief Foundation Stone, and to His servants He has committed the establishment of the City.

The Lights of the City. The Holy City has "No need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The unchanging and perpetual glory of the Lord is in its midst, shedding its light throughout every street and habitation. It is the light of perfect trust that enables the saints of God to "walk by faith and not by sight." It is that light which has inspired Fanny Crosby to write thousands of hymns of praise. The soul of the blind hymn writer is so filled with this Divine light that it is said she is so unaware of sightless orbs and perpetual darkness that she always speaks of seeing, and to her the world is illumined with unchanging sunlight. "I know no night," the sweet singer declared to a friend. In such a God-illumined life there are no cloudy days, no dark nights filled with a thousand phantoms of terror. Under the effulgence of the light that proceeds from the Lamb, the night of slavery has passed with all its terrors; the darkness of heathenism is being lifted, and palling blackness of sin flees before it, as the night before the rising

The Inhabitants. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." John is not speaking of translation to an unknown abode of bliss, but of this earth made blissful. How plainly is set forth the duty of Christian nations and the part which they shall have in the upbuilding of blandishments of honor, power and fame i this new heaven and new earth, which Christ

gave His life to establish. No nation has been so favored by a Divine Providence as the Republic in which we live. It was founded as a place of religious liberty: through its Sabbath laws and day of national thanksgiving and praise, with the Bible in the schools, our forefathers laid its corner stone as a Christian nation. But are we still walking in the light; is the government of today a fit superstructure for that cornerstone, or are graft and bribery, the legalized saloon, Sunday excursions, theaters and ball games, only the hay and stubble of a building to be destroyed under the flame of His righteousness? Are not these things retarding the coming of that new heaven and earth seen by the Seer of Patmos?

Its Tributaries. "The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." The Apostle Paul declared that the love of money is the root of all evil, and certainly the question of revenue has damned many a municipality, state and nation. It was impossible to convince the pro-slavery advocate that slavery so far from being a source of wealth was a financial drain upon the commonwealths that upheld it, and the nation, but its overthrow brought a greater era of prosperity than was ever known before. New England capital, New York financiers and Pennsylvania iron and steel brought their tribute to the new South, in the building of its mills and establishment of the cotton industry. It was formerly thought that prohibition destroyed trade, lessened the revenue and impoverished the community, but the history of no license towns and prohibition states has proved that civic righteousness builds up trade, and enriches town and state. Gradually we are learning what John saw in his vision; that the silver and the gold belong to God, and glory and honor and dominion are His, and all find their way to that nation which exalts Him in national and individual life, as surely as the needle finds

Gates Wide Open. The gates of the city are not to be shut by day, but will remain forever open, for there is no night there. When greed and lust and unholy ambition shall give place to the teaching of the Prince of Peace, the nations shall have no need for military defense. The most modern and costly dreadnought will be as antiquated and useless as the tub in which the child tries to row across the shallow pool. Standing armies will give place to the soldiers of the Cross and then shall be fulfilled the prophecy, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men," which the angels sang at the birth of Christ, whose advent ushered in the coming of universal peace.

A White City. It is a glorified city, beau-

tified and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. How careful the bride, be she peasant girl or princess, that her wedding apparel shall be spotless and perfect in all its details. Nothing common, nothing defiled may be in the trousseau of a bride. So all who would enter into this Jerusalem must come by the way of Holiness, over which nothing unclean is allowed to pass. Its people shall be all righteous, its daily routine of business and pleasure, holy. Such is Christ's ideal for His people everywhere. "The dwellers upon earth are not those who simply tread its soil and breathe its atmosphere." but those who are earthly in their lusts, whose lives are soiled by sin, who fear the truth and breathe out lies. Such could not live in the rarified atmosphere of the new earth. Like the rich young man who came to Christ to inquire the way of life, but found its pathway too hard, they go their way sorrowing.

The City Directory. The names of all those who enter the city are found in its directory—"In the Lamb's book of Life." God stands over that blest book of remembrance and attests every name, for we are told it is written before Him for them that fear the Lord, meditate upon His name, and obey His law. Every act—the slightest deed is recorded there, whether it be good or evil.

As God Sees. A visit to the Washington monument gives a commanding view of the capital city. The great shaft is only 546 feet high, but as one stands at the top and looks down, how small appear the city's treasures! The capitol in which laws are made for the government of a nation looks like a toy house. The United States treasury building might be a child's bank; the White House for the bare chance of entrance to which statesmen have sacrificed conviction and bartered principle, seems no longer than the Noah's ark with which one played in childhood days. If earthly glories and riches seem so small from so slight an altitude, how trivial all the worldly things for which men strive will appear to the One who looks down from the Great White Throne, before which we must bring all our desires.

Quiz. 1. Who is the Seer of Patmos supposed to have been? 2. By what name was he distinguished from the other disciples? 3. What is the legend concerning his death? 4. For whom did John record his vision? 5. What prophets of the Old Testament wrote of a Holy City? 6. How can we help to establish the City?

Seed Thoughts. 1. The earth which was created out of nothing will disappear into nothing.

2. The first glimpse of the Heaven-descending City shone in the Star above the Bethlehem manger. 3. To the worshipful soul all space is a temple; the cobblestones of every street an altar.

4. The Holy City is self-illuminating. 5. God is the only true light. 6. The cross is the weapon of peace. 7. The first heaven and earth God created alone; in the creation of the new heaven and earth we are to be co-workers with him.

HEW DOWN THE CORRUPT TREE.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS MATT. 7:13-29.

Prayer: Save us, O God, from insincerity in our profession of love for Thee and help us to bring forth the fruits of righteousness that by giving all diligence we may add to our faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and to knowledge temperance and to temperance patience and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness, so that we shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose we are and whom we berve. Amen.

Amid the snares misfortune lays
Unseen beneath the steps of all,
Blest is the love that seeks to raise
And stay and strnegthen those who fall;
Till taught by Him who for our sake
Bore every form of life's distress,
With every passing year we make
The sum of human sorrow less.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time, The words were spoken about A. D. 28. The Gospel of Matthew was written about A. D. 75. Place, The Sermon on the Mount, from which the text is taken, was spoken from a hillside near Capernaum. Persons, Jesus. The Disciples. The multitudes of plain people who heard Jesus gladly.

Scripture Setting: A sin against society, Deut. 21:20. The height of folly, Prov. 20:1. A source of poverty, Prov. 21:17. Sure to bring disaster, Isaiah 5:11; 28:1. Abhorred by Jesus, Matt. 24-49-50. 6:10; Gal. 5:21. Bible warning, Noah, Gen. 9:21; Nabal, 1 Sam. 25:36. Belshazzar, Dan. 5:1-6.

Life and Conduct Setting: 1. As to the man, the drink curse blunts his moral sense so that he never sees or feels things in their true sublimity. He is always at his worst and never at his best. 2. As to the family, it means poverty, shame, evil tempers, faction, separation and hopeless unhappiness. 3. As to society, it means waste of wealth, corrupt morals, dirty politics, disease, crime and general demoralization. Drink has been a greater scourge than war, famine, and pestilence put together.

RECKONING WITH THE DRINK CURSE.

The Corrupt Tree. The drink business makes a fair profession. It is never tired of showing how much it contributes to the public purse through payment of licenses and taxes, through the vast purchases of grain from which liquor is made and by the great aggregate of wages to the people employed in the industries more or less related to the traffic.

The Debit Side of Drink. But it never reckons on the other side the claims made upon the public purse for the maintenance of police and prisons, of almshouses and asylums, all of which draw their main business from the ranks of the drunkards; it never has anything to say of the damning effect of drink upon the individual and upon society—the loss of manhood and womanhood, the disruption of family and community ties, the dissoluteness, the profligacy, the murders, all of which have their springs in strong drink.

If ever the figure of a corrupt tree could be properly applied, it would be to the drink evil. In spite of its professions of good, it is evil and only evil, and that continually. By its fruits all know what its roots must be. Therefore, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, let it be hewn down and cast into the fire.

The Fate of the Corrupt Tree. There has always been a drink question, and from a very early date far-seeing rulers have feared it. It is said that as far back as the eleventh century before Christ a Chinese emperor had all the grapevines uprooted; and every reader of the Old Testament knows how urgently and insistently the prophets cried out against the evil as a threat against the state. In our own land the agitation against

the use of strong drink began in 1808, and in Ireland it was started in 1829, whence the movement spread rapidly into Scotland, and then to England. There are now organizations in every civilized land combating the evil, and their work received an unexpected endorsement and impetus from the governments of the nations at war, who, with one voice, though for different reasons, enacted prohibitory legislation. Manifestly, the tree is less luxuriant than it was and is showing most encouraging signs of disappearing altogether.

Making the Doom of the Tree Certain. In the United States we now have constitutional prohibition. It is hardly believable. It seems as if it were only yesterday that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was being laughed at, that the Prohibitionists were an object of scorn, that the Anti-Saloon League was regarded as an organization of well intentioned but impracticable cranks, and that, in general, the fight against the drink traffic was a fanatical attempt to divert the stars from their courses and to deny one of the fundamental instincts of human nature. The problem before the American people is a totally different one from that which in the past confronted them. They have now the problem, a serious and important one, of maintaining and promoting a public opinion which will make the law operative and binding and also of making their contribution to the education of other nations, so that prohibitory legislation shall become world-wide. No nation is ever safe where drunkenness is

HEW DOWN THE CORRUPT TREE.

a common and venial vice; no nation where prohibition exists is safe while in common social and commercial intercourse with nations where drinking customs freely obtain.

Loyal Acceptance. There must be a loyal acceptance of legislation. The class of a famous university in this country was preparing for an anniversary two years from now. A circular letter was sent to every member of this class asking if a stock of liquor should be secured against the day of celebration. Almost uniformly the answer was: "No. Let us obey the law." That is the proper temper.

An Informed Public Opinion. There must be a steady maintenance of public opinion on the dangerous character of intoxicants. One of the most useful agents in forming public opinion against the drink evil was the law requiring scientific temperance instruction in the public schools. The first law of this kind was passed in 1883, and now nearly every State in the Union is under such legislation. In the main the law is well enforced, but watchfulness is needed to see that the teachers who have this in hand are properly trained.

A Worthy Experiment. Here is the prediction of a distinguished scientist: "If really, for once, the entire civilized race of mankind should abstain from alcohol for thirty years, so that a completely sound generation should come into existence, there would result a transformation, a raising of the whole cultural structure, or heightening of the happiness and welfare of men, which could easily be placed beside the greatest historical reformations and revolutions

of which we know anything."

Keeping the Church at Its Best. The Church must also be kept at its best in the matter of temperance education. There is no way of estimating the influence upon public opinion of the instruction given on this subject in Sunday School, Young People's Meetings, and from the pulpit. The authority of the Church is still strong and effective in matters relating to the moral and spiritual life, and it is not in question that where the Church takes a positive and united stand she is yet the strongest single influence in determining social custom and habit.

Watchful Working. There must be no intermission of the watch upon the insidious campaigning of the enemy. He has unlimited resources at his command. He can buy the influence of legislators, publicists and statesmen; he can command the advocacy of skilled writers and eloquent speakers who can make the worse appear the better reasoning. Greed is not easily subdued; it is resourceful beyond any calculation and it is unscrupulous beyond any dreaming. The influence of the traffic is as near omnipotent as anything human can be. The great political parties have for years stood in awe of it.

Mr. Roosevelt and the Drink Issue. Even Mr. Roosevelt, who hated the traffic, would not commit his Progressive Party to an open rupture with it. During the wine growing crisis in France, the Government actually solicited the medical profession for a written declaration of four or five lines which would "tend to rehabilitate wine in public opinion." It is a matter of record that Germany and England were prepared to take common action against allowing poor Africa to be "the cesspool for European spirits," but they were defeated in this by the attitude of France, which made action impossible. It is not to be concluded because the United States has prohibition in its national Constitution that the liquor interests will cease their efforts at recovering the markets.

The Value of Prayer. And always one must count on the effective instrumentality of prayer. A suggestion of this kind is coming to be regarded as purely formal and not without a flavor of cant. If the Church should ever reach this view, the day of its glory is departed. Every great reform has prospered by prayer. It is by prayer that God gets into it; and until God gets into a thing it can never prosper. One has only to recall the history of temperance reform in this country to get something of the value of prayer. It was prayer more than any other one thing which brought and kept the various agencies together and which put into the movement not only a unifying but an informing and impelling spirit. An alliance with God makes any movement invincible and irresistible.

A Warning. This is from a French patriot, a member of the House of Deputies: "What do I think of alcoholism? I think it will slay us if we do not slay it. I think that drunkards are dangerous sick persons, but I think the most culpable are the manufacturers of the poison, the sellers of the poison, the state which refuses to intervene, the politicians who, knowing the evil, have not the courage to apply the remedy." We are in a position to do something about it. Our State Legislatures and our National Houses of Congress are the creatures of the popular will. If we seriously intend to have a country free from the curse of kind, we can have it.

Quiz and Study. 1. What are some of the Bible warnings against strong drink? 2. What is the earliest Bible example of drunkenness and what is its lesson? 3. Who are some of the men and women who in our own time have helped to make the world sober? 4. What did the governments of the nations at war during 1914-1918 do with respect to strong drink? 5. In what order did the states ratify the constitutional amendment for prohibition?

Practical Thoughts. 1. Give the children a chance by forbidding the use of strong drink and tobacco as long as they are subject †) family control. 2. No one is in danger of drunkenness who wholly abstains. 3. He is a good patriot who for the nation's sake refrains willingly from the drink habit. 4. He is a good Christian who for the world's sake preaches total abstinence. 5. Drunkenness means poverty, wretchedness, woe and eternal death.

DR. CHARLES M. STUART.

ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON IS I CORINTHIANS 10:23-33.

Prayer: Our Father in Heaven it is in Thee that all our help lies. As Thou hast helped us to the glorious liberty which is in Christ, inspire us to aid others in their struggle for a like freedom. Forbid that we should do anything to cause a brother to stumble and grant that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, it may all be done to the glory of God. Amen.

Help us, O Lord, Thy yoke to wear Delighting in Thy perfect will Each other's burdens learn to bear And thus Thy law of love fulfill.

THE SUBJECT IN ITS RELATIONS.

Historical Setting: Time and Place. The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written by Paul in the early spring of A. D. 56 just before he left Ephesus for Troas in the course of his kind missionary tour (Acts, 19). Corinth was the capital of Roman Greece a wealthy commercial center and the home of a restless superficial intellectualism. Persons, Paul, at this time nearing his sixtieth year. The Corinthians an alert, but unstable people welcoming the gospel, but reluctant to give up heathen practice.

Scripture Setting: Paul Visits Corinth, Acts, 18:1-17. The Vices of Corinth, 1 Cor. 5:1-12. Liberal-

ity of the Corinthian Church, 2 Cor. 9:1-15. Christ's Law of Self Denial, Matt. 5:30; 19:21-28. Crucifixion of Self, Acts, 17:20-27. The Reward of Self Denial, Mark, 10:29-30; 1 Pet. 4:12-19; Rev. 7:9-17.

Life and Conduct Setting: The Epistle sets forth, 1. The Christian is never quite free from fight against sin. 2. Sin makes its attack under many guises. 3. Sometimes the flesh asserts itself. 4. Sometimes pride of mind betrays us. 5. Sometimes religious doubt overcomes us. 6. But the remedy for all is fellowship with Jesus and a loving concern for all men's good,

A TEST OF BROTHERLY LOVE.

Raising the Question. Professor Márcus Dods in his admirable commentary on this First Epistle to the Corinthians tells the story thus: Fancy yourself at a Corinthian dinner table; the host is a heathen, three of the guests are Christians. The meal is being served. It is observed that some of the food offered is part of the sheep or ox offered that morning in sacrifice to an idol. Different views are taken at once. The heathen guests raise no question whatever. The Christian guests are divided. One thinks that to eat food which has been offered to idols is wrong; to him it is an endorsement of idolatry. The other two regard the whole issue as indifferent. One, however, wants to help the man whose conscience is sensitive about it and stands by him in declining to eat. second sees no reason why he should have his liberty restricted by what he considers the silly scruples of a weak brother, so he indulges. Not, "Who is right," but "Who is Christian?" is the question. And it is this question thus raised that Paul tries to

The Test of Character. It is just upon these matters which are really morally indifferent that a man has a chance to display the character of his religion. Strictly speaking dancing, theatre going, card playing are not immoral. But with some, perhaps many people, they are sources of temptation to immoral-

ity. The Christians under the law of liberty might indulge, under the higher law of love he will refrain.

Answering the Question. The question was really a serious one in Corinth. The Christian converts, in numerous instances, were taken from the pagan community. According to the universal custom "every meal was in a manner dedicated to the household gods by laying some portion of it on the family altar." More than that, on the occasion of any family celebration offerings were made in the temple and, later, the reserved portions were served at the feast given by the worshiper to friends and invited guests. Still further, on the occasion of public or national celebrations the same custom was observed. The Christian was in this dilemma. By eating he seemed to be sanctioning idol worship; by refusing to eat he was separating himself from his family, his friends, his state. In many instances the question was one of life or death.

Diana or Christ. There is a familiar picture of "Diana or Christ" in which a young Christian convert is being put to the test by officers of the government. Let her but offer a pinch of dust as incense to Diana and she lives; let her refuse and she dies. Pliny in a famous letter to Trojan comments upon the stubbornness of the Christians who would rather die than worship the statue of the Emperor.

The Law of Liberty. The religion of Jesus says Paul is not a question of meat at

ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

all. In this was one of the things which distinguished it from the religion of Moses which forbade the eating of meat offered in heathen sacrifice. "Instances are on record of men dving cheerfully rather than suffer such contamination." The case of Daniel and his friends illustrate this prejudice. Paul is not afraid to bring forward the law of liberty. "In regard to the question of eating the meat of animals killed in idolatrous sacrifices" he says, "We enlightened Christians know that such meat cannot defile us. Idols have no real power to defile meat." It is time this question had been before the council at Jerusalem and the council had decided to the contrary. The decision expressly stipulated that converts from among the Gentiles should abstain from things polluted by connection with idolatry. Paul, in the present instance, reviews the whole case and decides in favor of the larger liberty. But only that he may bring greater prominence.

The Law of Love. For, he says, as long as we are bound up in each other we cannot live with respect to ourselves alone. Our duty to others is quite as imperative as our individual rights. It is an impious thing to give thanks to God for a right to indulge when such indulgence works harm to one's neighbor. "When," he says in effect, "when you so use your liberty, in itself allowable, as to make it a means of moral destruction to the weak Christian you do him a great moral injury and violate the law of Christ." Then comes his own noble declaration of lovalty: "If what I eat causes my brother to fall, never again to the end of my days will I touch any kind of animal food for fear I should cause my brother to fall." This is in exact harmony with the saying of Jesus: "Whoever shall occasion the fall of one of these little ones who believes in me, it would he better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

A Personal Testimony. I, as a Christian man and knowing that the earth and its fullness are the Lord's, may feel at perfect liberty to drink wine. I may feel quite convinced in my own mind that morally I am not one whit the worse for doing so. But I cannot determine whether I am to indulge myself or not without considering the effect my conduct will have on others. There may be among my friends some who know that their temptation lies that way and whose conscience bids them altogether refrain. If by my example such persons are encouraged to silence the voice of their own conscience then I incur the incalculable guilt of helping to destroy a brother for whom Christ died.

PROFESSOR MARCUS DODS.

The Limitations. This law of love was recognized by Epictetus the pagan philosopher who when asked how any one could eat so as to please God, answered, "By eating justly, temperately and thankfully." No one could fulfill this obligation without thinking of the effect of his conduct on others. But must the weak Christian brother always and in everything be the rule of my life? By no means. The true Christian will have no serious difficulty in drawing the line where his duty ends and the other begins. His main difficulty will be in exercising the law of love to the extent he might and, therefore, ought.

Quiz and Study. 1. Find out all you can about the early church in Corinth. Were the "saints" perfect then? 2. What were some of the temptations with which they struggled. 3. What was the difficulty about eating meat offered to idols? 4. Why should we deny ourselves to save another? 5. Are we to forego everything for the sake of another? 6. When does it become the duty of another to deny himself for our sake? 7. What was Christ's view on this subject?

Practical Thoughts. 1. Make the will of God your rule of life. 2. Eating harmful food is not eating to the glory of God. Drinking harmful beverages is not drinking to the glory of God. 4. Playing harmful games is not playing to the glory of God. 5. Practicing dishonesty in business is not doing business to the glory of God. 6. Consideration for others is a religious duty. 7. Abstaining from forms of amusement innocent in themselves and for us, but dangerous for others is both a duty and a privilege. 8. God is not unmindful of our struggles; He that keepeth us never slumbers DR. CHARLES M. STUART. nor sleeps.













